

Univerzita Hradec Králové

Pedagogická fakulta

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Dětská literatura ve výuce anglického jazyka na základní škole

bakalářská práce

Autor: Barbora Švecová

Studijní program: B0114A090004 Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na
vzdělávání

Studijní obor: Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání
Výtvarná tvorba se zaměřením na vzdělávání

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Helena Polehlová, Ph.D.

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Cíl, metody, literatura, předpoklady:

Práce se zaměří na využití dětské literatury při výuce anglického jazyka na základní škole. Teoretická část charakterizuje cílovou skupinu žáka, její potřeby a komplikace při vyučování, do kterého je důležité žáky aktivně zapojit. Pojednává o využívání příběhů v učení se jazyku a zdůvodní efektivitu této techniky. Druhá část prozkoumá, jak je literatura současně využívána v učebnicích a následně ve vyučovacích hodinách. Dále se zaměří na práci s vybraným příběhem ve výuce, aktivity s ním spojenými a reakci žáků.

Scott, W.A., Ytreberg, L.H. *Teaching English to Children*. Longman 1990.

Harmer, J. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Pearson, 2015.

Lazar, G. *Literature and Language Teaching. A guide for teachers and trainers*. CUP, 2010.

Pinsent, P. *The Power of the Page*. David Fulton Publishers, 1993.

Krashen, S. D. *The Power of Reading. Insights from the Research*. Heinemann, 2004.

Zadávací pracoviště: Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury,
Pedagogická fakulta

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Helena Polehlová, Ph.D.

Oponent: prof. PhDr. Bohuslav Mánek, CSc.

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci Dětská literatura ve výuce anglického jazyka na základní škole vypracovala pod vedením vedoucí závěrečné práce samostatně a uvedla jsem všechny použité prameny a literaturu.

V Hradci Králové dne ...

Poděkování

Děkuji Mgr. Heleně Polehlové, Ph.D., za odborné rady a cenné připomínky, jimiž přispěla k vypracování bakalářské práce.

Anotace

ŠVECOVÁ, Barbora. *Dětská literatura ve výuce anglického jazyka na základní škole*. Hradec Králové: Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Hradec Králové, 2022. 73 s. Bakalářská práce.

Bakalářská práce je zaměřena na využití dětské literatury ve výuce anglického jazyka na základní škole. Pojednává o výhodách a překážkách spojených s touto metodou ve školním prostředí a možnostech jejího využití na základě prostudované literatury. Zdůvodňuje efektivitu této techniky a pojednává o aktuálním využití dětské literatury na základních školách. Dále popisuje vytvoření modelové hodiny a její následnou realizaci ve výuce.

Klíčová slova: dětská literatura, výuka anglického jazyka, četba

Annotation

ŠVECOVÁ, Barbora. *Children's Literature in Teaching English at Elementary School*. Hradec Králové: Faculty of Education, University of Hradec Králové, 2022. 67 pp. Bachelor Degree Thesis.

The bachelor thesis is focused on the use of children's literature in English lessons at elementary school. Based on the research, it presents benefits and difficulties associated with this method in the school environment as well as the possibilities of its application. It justifies the effectiveness of this technique and covers the current usage of children's literature at elementary schools. Furthermore, it describes the creation of a model lesson and its subsequent implementation in class.

Keywords: children's literature, English language teaching, reading

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že bakalářská závěrečná práce je uložena v souladu s rektorským výnosem č. 13/2017 (Řád pro nakládání s bakalářskými, diplomovými, rigorózními, dizertačními a habilitačními pracemi na UHK).

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Introduction

Children's literature is one of the first sources which develop and educate children from their early stages; however, this genre may accompany people during their whole lives. What is more, owing to its simplicity and engaging plots, it can serve well in learning foreign languages. The English-speaking world provides countless such stories and tales, which can be utilized not only in the school environment but also outside of the classroom. This thesis explores whether it is possible to use children's stories during lessons at elementary schools and what impact it can have on students. The aim is to discuss the main benefits and difficulties related to reading and using children's literature in English-learning classes. The thesis research is conducted through an analysis of literature focused on this subject and an evaluation of a questionnaire, both of which lead to the creation of a lesson plan based on a selected children's book. The purpose of this thesis is also to show a real-life use of children's literature in class and introduce the subject of children's literature to teachers who would like to use it in their English classes as well. For this reason, the thesis also incorporates a chapter discussing the preparation of a lesson plan. Furthermore, the thesis addresses the question whether children's literature is currently used in English lessons at several elementary schools in the Czech Republic.

The first part of the thesis describes students at elementary school, their abilities, cooperation, and motivation, which should be considered in any teaching activity. The next section focuses on reading methods as well as specifics of children's literature, mainly why this genre is suitable for learning languages and what its distinguishing features are. Chapter 3 examines the important criteria for choosing a literary text, since it must be suitable for the students who are being taught. Moreover, it presents three most commonly used textbooks, which are frequently a core of the language teaching, and inspects the presence of children's stories in them. The following part explains why the book called *The Ice Monster* by David Walliams was chosen to create the lesson plan. The questionnaire evaluation shows the attitudes of English teachers towards using literary texts in their classrooms and reveals what they consider obstacles regarding

reading activities. Ultimately, the realized lesson is described in the last chapter, including its preparation and reactions of the students who were being taught.

1 Characteristics of Pupils at Elementary School

Even though every pupil at elementary school should be considered as an individual, there are many aspects that they share. Most of their abilities are only developing, and for this reason, their actions and behaviour are rather instable and may change fast. To provide learners with high-quality education, teachers have to be aware of their specific behaviour and needs. For teachers, their knowledge about the students is as important as their expertise in the subject that they teach. When the teachers have accurate information about the psychology of schoolchildren, they understand their problems better. In addition, they can precisely assess situations in the classroom. Every student has a different personality, interests, and learning style; moreover, their ability to learn is also either higher or lower. Consequently, there might also be various expectations from each of them.¹

1.1 Abilities

Learners aged ten years and above do not have difficulties distinguishing between fact and fiction. They can comfortably learn using abstract ideas and symbols. For this reason, they perceive grammar structures and sentence formation as more logical and natural than their younger peers. They can work with only spoken words without the constant need for seeing them in a graphic representation.² The students' understanding of themselves in relation to the outside world increases when they think about activities with a new and often more critical mindset.

In this age group, abilities connected to reading are at an appropriate level for working with original literary texts. Being capable of reading books, magazines, and other writings surrounding them is crucial; nonetheless, children need to appreciate this skill even in the second language. This may be more easily fulfilled when teaching older students. Reading

¹ HARMER, Jeremy. *The practice of English language teaching*. Fifth edition. Harlow: Pearson, 2015. ISBN 978-1-4479-8025-4, p. 86

² HARMER, 2015, p. 82

also improves their development in learning,³ which is why they should continue with it. The teacher must be careful about choosing the right material, so the students can understand most of it. Having adequate language skills, they should be able to interpret and respond to the text they read.⁴ It is recommended not to work with a too low level of language in pre-intermediate classes. The feeling of understanding everything may mislead the students into thinking that they already know everything. For this reason, Anderson suggests that teachers should present content that has slightly more advanced structures, with the expectation that they will grasp 75 per cent of the meaning.⁵

Working with this age group might be challenging especially when it comes to the issue of authority, which can be sometimes problematic. Children at the discussed stage of life start searching for their own identities, which lasts approximately until their young adulthood.

1.2 Cooperation

First, children at elementary schools seek a group to which they could belong. They must feel that they are a part of a community where they are safe.⁶ Besides, a safe environment promotes the natural independence of individuals.⁷ Being independent is one essential skill, nevertheless, cooperating with peers allows pupils to progress faster. Sitting in the classroom with one's classmates encourages work, which is one way to develop efficiency in the process of education. Grouping children whenever possible is always a good choice. However, it is a must for teachers to be able to work with their pupils to avoid misbehaviour during grouping and group activities.

Although reading is considered an individual activity, there are many moments in which cooperation among students is needed. To be comfortable in forming relationships is a required skill for learning a foreign language, since communication is the main purpose

³ HARMER, 2015, p. 122

⁴ BURNS, SIEGEL (eds.), *International perspectives on teaching the four skills in ELT: listening, speaking, reading, writing*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. ISBN 978-3-319-63443-2, p. 153

⁵ BURNS, SIEGEL (eds.), 2018, p. 155

⁶ HOWARD, S. "What is Waldorf Early Childhood Education?" *Gateways Fall/Winter. Waldorf Early Childhood Education Association*, 2006, p. 1

⁷ LAMB, Michael E. and Richard M. LERNER. *Handbook of Child Psychology and Developmental Science*. 3rd. United States: John Wiley, p. 70, 2015. ISBN 1118136799.

of languages. Even literature and reading classes can foster this competence. Post-reading activities may focus on it. One of the simplest techniques for getting students to talk to each other is to let them check the answers from previous tasks together before they discuss their answers with the teacher.⁸ In this case, they all follow the same aim of correctly understanding and completing the given assignment. Moreover, using different stories is a great way to always have a topic for further discussion.⁹ Not every child works well in a group; on the other hand, it is also possible that an individual participates more actively when being in a group. This is due to a less intimidating learning environment when compared to speaking in front of the entire class.¹⁰

School learning takes place in groups as organizational units in the classroom. Students' moods and thoughts are influenced by their dynamics so its maintenance should be taken seriously since it also helps enhance the class management.

1.3 Motivation

Unquestionably, a key aspect of learning foreign languages is to stay focused and motivated. To learn a whole system of communication in another language is a long journey, which can last even for the rest of one's life, when taken seriously and in-depth. For most children in the Czech Republic, it is at school where they get acquainted with English for the first time. This might appear to them as simply another subject among the many that they have to attend; however, learning English is much more than that. Even if someone is not interested in foreign language learning, they must inevitably acquire at least a basic knowledge of English. The current world full of international opportunities requires this capability for better connections with others and life in general. This fact might be self-evident for those who have already experienced such situations. Still, it is useful to inform English learners about the importance of the language. As stated above, children perceive the world in a way different from the adults, so they do not have to

⁸ HARMER, p. 126, 2015

⁹ Reading as a Social Practise for Adult Migrants: Talk Around Text, ROACH in BURNS, SIEGEL (eds.), *International perspectives on teaching the four skills in ELT: listening, speaking, reading, writing*. Cham: Palgrave Macmilan, 2018, ISBN 978-3-319-63443-2, p. 188.

¹⁰ NUTTALL, Christine E. *Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 2005. Print, p. 162

realize the importance of language learning. They simply need to know why they are learning English.

Speaking and listening may be more motivating for many learners than reading.¹¹ These skills are most needed in verbal communication, which is most readily noticeable in learning a foreign language. For this reason, students may not think of reading as an important skill to have. In order to motivate students in lower-secondary school to read, it is useful to explain the benefits of reading in a foreign language. For instance, not every literary piece is translated, so the more languages people know, the more information they can get. Asking learners about the practical benefits in activities associated with this ability may also support their enthusiasm and encourage them to read.¹²

At this stage, many students can already have lots of experience with reading in their mother tongue. Mori's research in 2020 shows that the students' willingness to read in English may not differ significantly from their interest in reading in their native tongue.¹³ Furthermore, the mutual effect of sharing the reading experience between teachers and students, as well as among students alone, is predicted to positively impact their reading performance.¹⁴ This insight supports the importance of cooperation and communication in class, where each student can influence another.

The main issue with the lack of motivation to read might have to do with the fact that it is mostly done at school, therefore in a formal setting, which may come across to children as yet another task they need to manage.¹⁵ To avoid this sense of obligation, children should have more freedom in selecting what they would like to read in class. However, it is not so easily done in the classroom because of the requirement for the children to pass

¹¹ Teaching Reading to Encourage Critical Thinking and Collaborative Work, MURTININGSIH, HAPSARI in BURNS, SIEGEL (eds.), *International perspectives on teaching the four skills in ELT: listening, speaking, reading, writing*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, ISBN 978-3-319-63443-2, p. 154.

¹² HULLEMAN, GODES, HENDRICKS, & HARACKIEWICZ, 2010, in GUTHRIE, John T. and Susan Lutz KLAUDA. *Effects of Classroom Practises on reading Comprehension, Engagement, and Motivations for Adolescents*. International Literacy Association and Wiley. International Literacy Association and Wiley, 2014, 49(4), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43497193>

¹³ MORI, 2020 in BURNS, SIEGEL (eds.), 2018, p. 154.

¹⁴ GUTHRIE, John T. and Susan Lutz KLAUDA. *Effects of Classroom Practises on reading Comprehension, Engagement, and Motivations for Adolescents*. International Literacy Association and Wiley. International Literacy Association and Wiley, 2014, 49(4), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43497193>

¹⁵ MURTININGSIH, HAPSARI, 2006 in BURNS, SIEGEL (eds.), 2018, p. 154.

their exams and for the teachers to follow the syllabus. One way to achieve more freedom of choice could be to create a list of books or stories chosen by the teacher. Students would then have the opportunity to choose the one they would, in their opinion, enjoy the most. To succeed in developing reading skills, consistent habits should be created and maintained.¹⁶

¹⁶ MURTININGSIH, HAPSARI in BURNS, SIEGEL (eds.), p. 154.

2 Reading Matter

Utilizing children's literature in lessons needs a careful preparation and knowledge about several issues which this field presents. It is crucial to know what children's literature is, what it offers, and why it is beneficial to use. The following chapters describe the specifics of this literary genre, methods of reading which can be used for teaching, and the benefits of reading.

2.1 Specifics of Children's Literature

Literature intended for children is written in different genres. Knowing what a particular genre of literature entails is a prerequisite for using it effectively and benefiting from it. This chapter presents an insight into the characteristics of children's literature in general, such as the use of language and description of protagonists. Additionally, from the great variety of genres which this type of literature offers, the chapter discusses the features of fairy tales, short stories, and novels, which are the most frequent forms in this field.

What specifically defines the term children's literature is undeniably the audience for which it is intended. However, childhood is not so easy to classify because of the slow transformation which always coincides with the stages of becoming an adult.¹⁷ Children's literature could be defined as a category of books entirely dependent on children's interests and development.¹⁸ Of course, there are several divisions of the stages of childhood according to the child's age, but one should be mindful of the arbitrariness of such divisions. For this reason, it may be difficult to accurately distinguish literature for children and adults.¹⁹ Many books are labelled with the recommended age; nevertheless, this information only helps in choosing books and does not specify exactly for whom the book is really meant. There are no age-related guidelines about who should read what story. It is natural that adults can lose their interest in these books, unless they have kids

¹⁷ GRENBY, M. O. and Andrea IMMEL. *The Cambridge companion to children's literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, c2009. Cambridge companions to literature. ISBN 978-0-521-86819-8., p.14

¹⁸ HUNT, Peter. *Understanding children's literature*. London: Routledge&Kegan Paul, 1998. ISBN 0-415-19546-2., p. 15

¹⁹ STAKIĆ, M. The specifics of children's literature in the context of genre classification. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. Italy: MCSER Publishing, 5(19), 8. ISSN 2039-2117. Available from: doi:10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n19p243

of their own; on the other hand, it is fascinating that everyone was indeed the primary audience of children's literature at some point in the past. Furthermore, most adults effectively remain the target audience, since it is they who create and purchase this content.²⁰

Language is the most distinguishing factor of children's literature, as its use is significant for young readers who are learning it. This applies not only to students learning English as a second language but also to young children who are reading in their mother tongue. As the attention span of young readers is often limited, even the use of appropriate language can have a positive impact on it. Maintaining the reader's attention can be achieved by clear sentences and graphic layout, both of which encourage the interaction between the author and the reader.²¹ Another way of capturing the child's attention is variety in fonts and their sizes. For instance, David Walliams practises this technique mainly for interjections and onomatopoeic words, which frequently occur in his stories. Apart from this, also emotional adjectives or names of places can be differentiated from the rest of the text. Puns and play with words also increase the interest of readers and develop their vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, the simple style and various aesthetic aspects are the products of the author's skill to employ them effectively.²²

Children enjoy characters who are approximately their age because it is easier to relate to them. Most of the time, the external description of the protagonists is more important than the psychological analysis of their actions.²³ The other way round, the decisions and behaviour of the characters reveal elements of their personality, when it is not introduced within the initial depiction of the character. Furthermore, the names of characters often suggest their attitudes or correspond with their appearance.²⁴ For instance, Dotty the cleaner of the Natural Museum in the novel *The Ice Monster* is truly an eccentric and slightly mad lady, as her name indicates. Even though she is a grownup, her actions and

²⁰ GRENBY, 2009, pp. 13-14.

²¹ MARJANOVIĆ, V. in STAKIĆ, M. The specifics of children's literature in the context of genre classification. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. Italy: MCSER Publishing, 5(19), 8. ISSN 2039-2117. Available from: doi:10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n19p243

²² STAKIĆ, M., 2014

²³ STAKIĆ, M., 2014

²⁴ Humor and the body in children's literature, MCGILLS, R. in GRENBY, M. O. and Andrea IMMEL. *The Cambridge companion to children's literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, c2009. Cambridge companions to literature. ISBN 978-0-521-86819-8., p.258

ideas are frequently more absurd than those of a five-year-old child. Such attitudes are commonly ascribed to adult characters, so children can correct them and laugh at their nonsensical language. They are correspondingly engaged by heroes of outstanding courage, naivety, power, and moral insight, as they can be the idols to whom the readers look up.²⁵ In Carol Lynch-Brown's words: "*A well-portrayed character can become a friend, a role model, or a temporary parent to a child reader.*"²⁶

Children's literature can be divided into different genres and subgenres, which are almost as extensive and diverse as adult literature. Furthermore, it has its own repertoire of classic genres and subgenres, such as novels, short stories, fairy tales, fables, horrors, adventure stories, etc. Fictional stories prevail over the historical and biographical ones, for children love make-believe stories and characters. Many traditional stories arose from people's lives and imagination in the past. Even prehistoric humans appreciated storytelling in graphic form, which shows the meaning and importance of stories for our further development.²⁷ The narratives which have not been forgotten have survived in written form and belong to traditional children's literature. They contain valuable historical stories, represent our literary heritage, and connect us to our cultural beginnings. These are known as folktales, and they have long been a favourite story form for youngsters, who have been loving them since they were little. Folktales where magical creatures appear are called fairy tales, and almost each of them has several variants in different countries; however, the main characters and the plot always remain unchanged. Surprisingly, despite the geographical and societal differences, their essence is rather similar everywhere.²⁸ Witches, fairies, elves, and other supernatural creatures are essential protagonists in this genre. Their characters are always flat, as it is obvious who is good or evil, and the good qualities win in the end. Due to their immature audience, they have to set adequate models of moral behaviour and be very clear in their narratives. Consequently, they are also a good option for English learners.

Short stories can be considered a counterpart to novels in their length, as they present the main aspects of prose narratives but in a limited scope and length. This is their greatest

²⁵ STAKIĆ, M., 2014

²⁶ LYNCH-BROWN, Carol. *Essentials of Children's Literature*. 3rd edition. Illinois: Northern Illinois University, 1999. ISBN 0-205-28136-2., p. 29

²⁷ LYNCH-BROWN, 1999, p. 93

²⁸ LYNCH-BROWN, 1999, p. 100

advantage because they can be better adapted to one lesson in which they can be read. Their various topics can be used in different activities, so everyone has the opportunity to appreciate the theme they enjoy. This type of reading could seem less challenging for students to read because they are aware of the brevity and they can perceive the success of completing the assignment. In fact, short stories can be sectioned as well, if necessary. Additionally, their economic use of language is one of the aspects that makes them unique among other genres. There is also a need for rereading short stories. It may be impossible to comprehend everything that the narrative describes; therefore, another take may give new information and insights into the events. Indeed, they are an excellent source when working with literature in class for the first time.²⁹

The length of novels provides the opportunity to indulge in reading for a significant period of time. For this reason, the story must be engaging for the readers and have a good storyline which encourages the readers to follow. In this case, it is preferable to work with the book outside class as well as in school; otherwise, finishing it may be impossible. The plot of the narrative combines all the incidents in it, making it the most crucial component of the novel.³⁰ The novel is structured into chapters, which makes it easier to read. Its individual parts rather than the entire narrative should be used for work in class. Novels often feature more characters, which may improve the subsequent work with the text in class, where each student may, for instance, discuss their favourites.

2.2 Methods of Reading

Working with a text in class involves several approaches to using it. It is unquestionable that teachers should use a reading method which will be the most effective for language learning. To achieve the desired results, teachers should be familiar with the basic procedures, their division, and advantages. For this reason, this chapter describes several methods of using the text, including reading aloud, silent reading, and intensive and extensive reading, and compares analytical work with the text with skimming and scanning.

²⁹ COLIE, SLATER, 2011, p. 196

³⁰ LYNCH-BROWN, 1999, p. 26

One of the most common methods is undoubtedly reading aloud, which is considered a distinct skill because most students do not need it much outside of the school environment.³¹ However, this approach can also be beneficial for learning a language, practising new phrases and vocabulary in context, and correctly forming grammar structures. In most cases of language learning, it can be beneficial to beginners because they need to pay a close attention to each word and distinguish different sounds during reading. When reading aloud, rhythm, intonation, and correct pronunciation are taught and learnt.³² The method of reading aloud has several advantages, which is why it is used so often in classes. However, for this method to be beneficial in teaching, it should be approached in a specific way, since it is not enough to let students read one by one. A good practice is, for example, for the teacher to first read aloud a sentence or short paragraph and subsequently ask the students for choral repetition.³³ The students are then familiar with the intonation and articulation of the sounds, so many mistakes can be better avoided. It is also known that having the parents read to little children is a major prerequisite for learning to speak the language properly.³⁴

Another method involves cooperation among students and working in pairs to rehearse dialogues from the novel. This promotes accurate intonation, since it is different in English and Czech. When the students carefully focus on the pitch of their voice, they can also help each other by telling their partner what they sound like; for instance, friendly, angry, uninterested, etc.³⁵ Graphic novels, which are part of almost every textbook, provide great opportunities for such exercises. Conversations from children's books can be used in the same way, since direct speech often occurs in them as well. To promote accurate intonation, children should listen to it first and then try to imitate it.

On the other hand, in situations when only one student reads aloud and the rest should be listening, the usefulness of this method fades away. Most of the time the reader minds only the utterance rather than focusing on connecting the words and understanding the

³¹ SCOTT, Wendy A. and Lisbeth H. YTREBERG. *Teaching English to children*. Harlow: Longman, 1991. Longman keys to language teaching. ISBN 058274606x., p. 57

³² SCOTT, Wendy A. and Lisbeth H. YTREBERG, 1991, p. 58

³³ SCOTT, Wendy A. and Lisbeth H. YTREBERG, 1991, p. 58

³⁴ BAMFORD, Julian and Richard R. DAY. *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language*. 7th. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. ISBN 978-0-521-01651-3., p. 20

³⁵ SCOTT, Wendy A. and Lisbeth H. YTREBERG, 1991, p. 58

content of the text. Unless the students know the text in advance, they do not know what it is about, even though they read it a moment ago. It may only encourage slips of the tongue and decrease the self-awareness of one's errors. Consequently, it can turn into an extremely dull and unexciting activity for those students who are not reading at the moment.³⁶ Most important, the teacher should decide whether it is worth the time.

In other words, reading aloud can support the practice of connected speech, which is necessary for successful communication. Moreover, slower learners can benefit from it because it may boost their confidence in speaking when they repeat perfectly created structures which may be too complicated for them to produce spontaneously.³⁷ Even so, the use of this method should be carefully considered because of the effect it can have on the teaching process.

Silent reading is something that most learners carry with them for the rest of their lives.³⁸ Being able to accurately comprehend written text is one of the vital skills in learning English. Although it may be challenging for students, especially at the early stages of the language-learning journey, there are a few guidelines which should be followed in order to understand a text with fewer difficulties. Brown introduces three basic rules. First, he establishes the importance of not pronouncing each word in our heads. Second, we should perceive more than one word at a time, which means focusing on whole phrases and sentences rather than on individual distinguishing units. This is connected to skipping apparently unimportant words that the reader does not know. The overall understanding of the text is what makes it meaningful, and figuring out the gist of the text through the context is the best way to read silently. However, if the unknown vocabulary influences the whole text, it is time to look it up.³⁹ Kató Lomb claims: *"Ignore what you can't immediately understand. If a word is important, it will occur several times and explain itself anyway."*⁴⁰ This well illustrates that even though the learners have not yet acquired

³⁶ HARMER, p. 318, 2015

³⁷ HARMER, p. 31, 2015

³⁸ SCOTT, Wendy A. and Lisbeth H. YTREBERG, 1991, p. 60

³⁹ BROWN, H. Douglas. *Teaching by principles: an interactive approach to language pedagogy*, 2015 2nd ed. New York: Longman, c2001. ISBN 0-13-028283-9, p. 404

⁴⁰ LOMB, Kató. *POLYGLOT: How I Learn Languages*. Hungary: Scott Alkire, 1970. ISBN 978-1-60643-706-3, p. 69

the right level for reading, there are no excuses for them not to read simple stories only because they fear that they will not understand everything.

This type of reading also considers the individual needs of the students, since they can read without being disturbed at a pace which is comfortable for them. However, when the teacher needs to be sure that everyone in class follows the activity at the same time, most likely due to lack of time or other factors which cannot be easily avoided by preparation, it is useful to play a recording of the text simultaneously when the students are reading silently. In this case, the students can focus on the correct pronunciation and intonation of the English language as well as following the story and appreciating it without struggling. This method may help them to understand the text while they are still tackling the reading process.

Aside from the basic distinction between silent reading and reading aloud, there is also a difference between intensive and extensive reading. Students must participate in both to get the most out of their reading. Intensive reading is commonly chosen and led by the teacher because it is specially designed to support the development of language knowledge. It focuses mainly on getting the general meaning of the text, improving one's reading abilities, and several other goals. Materials for intensive-reading purposes are often included in textbooks, followed by different kinds of exercises, such as true/false statements, multiple-choice questions, and other tasks.⁴¹ Since understanding grammar and the use of the language are at the core of this method, it may be more complicated for learners to interpret the essence of the paragraphs.⁴² Therefore, they should be well instructed before reading to prevent confusion and misunderstanding in post-reading activities. The simplest way to avoid this is to tell the students to read the questions and exercises before they start focusing on the text. They can discuss with partners what they think the right answers could be, so they also engage their creativity, independent thinking, and cooperation. This can improve their speaking skills as well. Furthermore, teachers can ask the children to connect with the reading material in a variety of ways, for example, searching additional information about it or finding songs and movies which could be associated with the story.⁴³

⁴¹ HARMER, p. 314, 2015

⁴² BROWN, p. 409, 2015

⁴³ HARMER, p. 314, 2015

Intensive reading approaches include analytical reading as one of the most prominent ways for strengthening linguistic competence. It can be accomplished, for instance, by examining an extract from literature for unfamiliar language usage about which the students are not sure yet. So, unless the textbook or another source provides it, the educator must determine what to pay attention to. This can include finding new vocabulary, phrases, past tense of verbs, or simply focusing on any new structures. The students can be pointed to any part of the text and asked what it describes and what its purpose in the work is. It is beneficial to continue working with the chosen language units further to make sure that the students will incorporate these units into their regular use of English. Additionally, these drills develop writing abilities along with reading skills because students can look at the correct outline, common phrases, and cohesive devices that are commonly used to create meaningful literary works. Apart from this, analytical reading is suitable for all levels of English.⁴⁴ Even though this method may be too repetitive and not so exciting, it is by far the most helpful approach to learning new vocabulary and structures. Still, it should be alternated by different activities.

In contrast to intensive reading, extensive-reading methods are also suggested in teaching a language through literature. This method usually occurs outside the classroom and has been used mainly for practising reading in general and most important, for having a good time and learning the language continually. It concerns primarily longer texts or whole books which should be read by the students. For this reason, the students can choose what they want to read, which may make the activity more engaging at the very beginning. Each student is interested in different genres and stories; therefore, they have the opportunity to pursue their reading preferences. Furthermore, there are many books to choose from, so the teacher should always be helpful and provide some examples of books on a reading list.⁴⁵ By reading more, the students can improve their knowledge of vocabulary, writing, and even pronunciation, when most of them pronounce each word in their heads.⁴⁶ Entertaining reading may expand the language level much more quickly than reading which is done as an obligatory task.

⁴⁴ HARMER, 2015, p. 315

⁴⁵ HARMER, 2015, p. 319

⁴⁶ HARMER, 2015, p. 319

Many students may find it unusual that some parts of the excerpt which they are to read can go unnoticed when using the skimming and scanning methods. However, this is exactly the point of these techniques, which is not paying attention to every detail in the text. It is necessary to skip some sentences or even paragraphs to master these quick reading methods to get in the habit of efficient reading. These methods are crucial to use because they allow the readers to choose the parts of the text which are relevant to invest time in. They do not, however, eliminate the necessity of close reading because their use should be further complemented by other methods and activities. Unquestionably, pupils will require a lot of practice with these strategies if they are to use them in their learning. One great concept may be to create competitions to master fast reading, for instance, when looking for information in the text. Many assignments can also be completed in groups, making the exercises more attainable for all students.⁴⁷ Simply described, skimming is the process of quickly looking at a document for its primary idea. That can be useful when students need to decide whether a particular text is suitable for their project or other work that they need to do research for. It is also convenient for managing difficult papers. On the other hand, scanning requires less attention paid to the text because it is mainly about searching for specific information, such as a date or name.⁴⁸

All the techniques and methods of reading should be considered when teaching a foreign language. Each of them has many advantages and disadvantages, so they should be used properly to avoid monotony and ineffectiveness.

2.3 Benefits of Reading

To be able to utilize reading in English classes, it is important to be aware of all the benefits that this activity may provide to students even outside the classroom. It is well known that reading has largely positive impact on people's lives, since it influences not only one's knowledge but also one's mindset, personal opinions, well-being, or cultural awareness, last of which is inextricably linked to learning a foreign language. For this reason, exposing students to books and written materials is important especially nowadays, when they tend to avoid traditional sources of information. In this case, teachers should utilize their expertise to encourage their pupils to acquire this type of skill

⁴⁷ NUTTALL, 2005, pp. 48, 49

⁴⁸ NUTTALL, 2005, pp. 48, 49

as well. Even though there are several obstacles that need to be overcome during reading in class, the results of developing this skill are unquestionably rewarding. Most of the time, difficult activities during learning are worth the effort, as is the case of working on reading skills. As a result of reading, the students' attitude to and perception of language can be advanced, in addition to their knowledge of grammar and other skills important to learning English.

An awareness of the unique elements of the culture whose language the pupils are learning brings about fascinating and useful information for understanding how to utilize the new language. Even though nothing replaces direct experience with native people and their culture, visiting the given nation is not always feasible for many people. Consequently, other ways of accessing such experience must be used. There is no doubt that it is easy nowadays to find information on digital media. On the other hand, books can provide a different view on the culture and the society, since a novel's universe provides a vibrant setting in which protagonists from many different social backgrounds can be presented. Not only do the readers vividly imagine what is happening in the story but they can also uncover the characters' mental processes, worries, and beliefs, which are not possible to obtain so easily from other sources.⁴⁹

Reading is more than just obtaining information; it also entails exercising the mind and gaining different points of view on various situations. One of the most beneficial effects of reading is its positive influence on mental health, which is essential for further development of children. For instance, stories may decrease the level of stress due to their power of directing the reader's thoughts to completely different situations and diverting the reader's attention from real life, encouraging introspective thinking. Getting immersed in a tale usually results in complete tranquillity; for this reason, reading particularly before sleep is often recommended.⁵⁰ This process also promotes imagination and allows the readers to create their own worlds in their minds. Additionally, reading can enhance creativity, which may also help with learning foreign languages. Being able to imagine various situations and invent many examples of interactions and conversations is a huge part of using a foreign language in the classroom. Moreover, it improves

⁴⁹ COLLIE, SLATER, 1990, p. 6

⁵⁰ KORKOUTA, L., Iliadis C, Frantzana A and Vakalopoulou V. Reading and Health Benefits. *Journal of Healthcare Communications* [online]. 2018, 03(04), 4 [cit. 2022-04-25]. ISSN 24721654. Available from: doi:10.4172/2472-1654.100149

decision-making and problem-solving skills because the brain and its imaginative capacity are intensely involved in such actions. The brain gets also more resistant to harm.⁵¹

Students can think about stories and create their own opinions about them. Therefore, they will be able to better develop their own ideas and critical attitudes to real-life issues, which will undoubtedly serve them in the future. Their cognitive perception improves as well, allowing for a more in-depth evaluation of the world around them. Some of their newly gained insights can help with the formation of their personality, which is especially crucial throughout the years when they are growing and developing.⁵² Simoton claims: “*Omnivorous reading in childhood and adolescence correlates positively with ultimate adult success.*”⁵³ Indeed, literature deals with many difficulties that the characters must solve, and as a result, it presents these concerns to its young audience, who experience them with the characters.⁵⁴

The use of real language is also presented in many stories, which is valuable for practising for various life situations; and these are frequently presented in many texts as well. This means that the learners can be inspired by the story and encouraged to apply the structures not only in the exercises of speaking and cohesive writing but also in real life. Furthermore, the students will understand how to deal with similar circumstances. They can also learn that different groups of people use various kinds of English, especially when referring to regions and dialects.⁵⁵ Everyday situations are included in the textbooks as well; however, they can appear too formal in many of them, while children’s literature may provide more relaxed and informal use of language. Therefore, texts intended for native speakers are especially valuable, although they may be more difficult to understand at the beginning.

⁵¹ KARKOUTA, 2018

⁵² CRIPPEN, Martha. The Value of Children's Literature. *Oneota Reading Journal* [www.luther.edu]. Luther College, 2012 [cit. 2022-05-18]. Available from: <https://www.luther.edu/oneota-reading-journal/archive/2012/the-value-of-childrens-literature/>

⁵³ SIMOTON, 1988 in PINSENT, P. 1993, p. 36

⁵⁴ KERSHAVARZI, A. (2012). *Use of literature in teaching English. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 554–559. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.159>

⁵⁵ KERSHAVARZI, 2012

Getting through books requires a high level of a close connection between the person who reads the book and the characters in it. That is necessary for understanding the story and its hidden meanings as well as for acquiring the language. When the novel gets the student's attention, the individual words may lose their importance because at the moment it is the whole story and its progress that matter the most. Readers can often get impatient and want to know what the development of the book is, so the language barrier and unknown structures are backgrounded. This is good way to avoid the urge to look up all the new vocabulary. As long as the reader is motivated, this can be advantageous to the entire language learning process.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, finding a suitable genre and story is different for each individual, and most often it is a random choice. The preferred kinds of books may also change, depending mostly on the stage of one's life, mood, and other aspects.⁵⁷

Reading may consist mostly in comprehending the text and approaching it with the intention to learn what information it provides. Nevertheless, this activity is not limited to this. If used well, it may help with all the skills which need to be attained to learn a new language. One of the most noticeable changes may occur in the writing process. Reading provides the learner with a natural knowledge of writing rules and coherent linking of ideas, including a knowledge of sentence formation and various possible structures. As reading precedes writing, it is unquestionably a beneficial procedure for excelling at both. It is the only way to get familiar with a different writing style, purpose, and meaning.⁵⁸ Spelling is also an important component. It is easy to improve the learners' spelling skills even without directly teaching them. When the readers encounter a paragraph that contains words they do not know how to spell, they take a fair first step towards learning it right. Pinsent introduces this in his publication on the study of teachers' perception and says that their spelling degrades when they read incorrectly written words in their learners' writings.⁵⁹ Jacoby and Holingshead even add that

⁵⁶ COLLIE, SLATER, 1990, p. 6

⁵⁷ KARKOUTA, 2018

⁵⁸ PINSENT, P. *The Power of the Page*. David Fulton Publishers, 1993, p. 37

⁵⁹ PINSENT, P. 1993, p. 16

*“Reading student essays may be hazardous to one spelling accuracy.”*⁶⁰ This only demonstrates the major influence that reading has on writing.

The school setting often demands a considerable amount of information from its students. One of the examples could be learning long lists of vocabulary by heart without any context. Approaching this issue via literature may significantly decrease the effort required on the part of the learners and ensure that the learners retain the new vocabulary in the long term. Even though the number of words learned in this way may not be high at first, the quality of their use in context takes precedence over quantity. Furthermore, those words which are misunderstood and those which must be looked up are insignificant when compared to the majority of the words which are correctly attained.⁶¹ Literary texts facilitate access to different situations in which a linguistic structure can be learned efficiently.⁶² What is emphasised more than the result of reading is the process which is responsible for accurate language use. Consequently, learning through reading literature occurs in a more active way, which strengthens the development of language. It should be also noted that many literary texts have a specific use of vocabulary, which is not always appropriate for a daily use of language. However, such resources contribute to the progress of the learner and should be chosen as an addition, for example, to textbooks.⁶³

There is a great deal of evidence that literature and its use in class can immensely improve language acquisition. Students can be more easily motivated, and the flow of reading enables a natural and unforced process of learning.

⁶⁰ JACOBY, HOLINGSHEAD, 1990 in PINSENT, P. *The Power of the Page*. David Fulton Publishers, 1993, p. 16

⁶¹ PINSENT, P. 1993, p. 16

⁶² KERSHAVARZI, 2012

⁶³ COLLIE, SLATER, 2011, p. 3

3 Using Literature in English Language Teaching

The following chapters present information about the practical use of literature in school and discuss the important criteria to consider when choosing a suitable story. Additionally, they describe the main difficulties which need to be overcome during the teaching process and analyse the presence of children's literature in textbooks currently being used at Czech elementary schools. The last part of this chapter suggests how to properly create a literature-based lesson plan.

3.1 Criteria for Choosing a Text

When using literature in the classroom, the teacher needs to choose from various available sources. Since there are many books and tales, it might be difficult to select the right one. Taking into account several criteria is how to be sure that the chosen literary work will provide in the class what is expected.

The decision to use a children's story has probably specific reasons and purposes; therefore, the teacher should make sure that these are achieved during the teaching process. Specific goals must be established, so the teacher knows what to focus on. Some of the goals may involve one of the language learning skills, such as vocabulary, speaking, reading, and so on, as well as their combination or a practice of grammar. To ensure the effectiveness of the lesson, it is beneficial to know the students well, so the aims can match their behaviour and skills. The aim of the lesson is dependent on the chosen text, since every story offers various possibilities of its use; therefore, there are a few important factors which must be considered.

Nuttall introduces suitability, exploitability, readability, and authenticity, which includes all the important elements to be aware of.⁶⁴ Suitability is without a doubt the most important criterion, on which the entire lesson is dependent. It involves primarily the interest of the students and all the mental processes which may be experienced during reading. The difficulty with choosing an engaging text is that not every child will

⁶⁴ NUTTALL, p. 170, 2005

appreciate the same plot, thus it is unlikely to satisfy all children.⁶⁵ This can be easily avoided when each learner works with their own book. Another way to prevent this is to choose for pupils of eleven to fifteen years a genre they enjoy at this age in general. Such a story could include adventurous elements, troubles that children often experience, or significant features of the country where the target language is spoken. A story fulfilling these criteria is most likely to provoke interest and inspire a positive attitude towards reading, which is another factor to deal with.⁶⁶

Readability involves the linguistic aspect of the text and considers the difficulty of understanding and learning new language structures. In this case, it is crucial to know the students' English level. Literary texts may involve rhetorical devices, idioms, puns, and other mechanisms. Lazar recommends that teachers should ask themselves certain questions when choosing a suitable text. These may be questions concerning the amount of language that the students will be able to deduce or the issue of motivation while dealing with the new vocabulary.⁶⁷ The teacher needs to find the right relative amount of the new grammar and structures in the text. There is no correct number for this; nevertheless, it is better not to work with many unfamiliar words. If the reading lesson is intended mainly for the pleasure in the activity and for the purpose of being exposed to the foreign language, a lower percentage of new language is suitable. For instance, when using only known words, the maximum potential of the text can be fulfilled. In contrast, working mostly with advanced structures may destroy the aim of the lesson, even though the content is engaging.⁶⁸

What helps students to understand better are also the illustrations that accompany the text. Their appearance in the story is crucial not only for the small children but even for those readers who have difficulties with getting the intended meaning of the story.⁶⁹ Pictures may enhance the motivation for reading and support the children's imagination. For this

⁶⁵ LAZAR, p. 52, 2010

⁶⁶ COLLIE, Joanne, SLATER, Stephen. *Literature in the Language Classroom: A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, p. 6, 2011. Print.

⁶⁷ LAZAR, p. 53, 2010

⁶⁸ NUTTALL, p. 175, 2005

⁶⁹ GÓMEZ, M. A. B., (2010). How to use tales for the teaching of vocabulary and grammar in primary education English class. *Revista Espanola de Linguistica Aplicada*, 23, 31–52., p. 39

reason, pictures should be present when using literature in class, and the teachers should acknowledge their benefits.

The selected extract should be the basis for the activities which will follow in the post-reading part of the lesson. In other words, the text must be exploitable if it is to be used in the classroom. The teacher should know in advance what activities will be used and what other sources will complement the text well.⁷⁰ Next to interest, this is perhaps the most significant requirement because it can simplify the learning of the language. The extract divided into activities develops different skills which should be practised. At this stage of selecting the children's book, the teacher has to know what the purpose of the lesson will be.⁷¹ Subsequently, the planning of the worksheets can follow.

Authentic texts are those written for native speakers of the language, and their basic function is not to teach a language.⁷² These books show the learners a real use of English and might stimulate their interest in understanding. There is a great advantage in using children's books because they are often written in an easier style but still use examples of a real language.⁷³ Features of these stories are not always present in specifically composed or edited texts. Some more difficult passages may be rewritten by the teacher, so the number of challenging parts is reduced. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that these substitutions may significantly change the flow of the text.⁷⁴

In conclusion, every story provides a different set of activities and exercises. Each described aspect should be taken into consideration when choosing a children's book for teaching a foreign language. The enjoyability of the reading activity for the students depends not only on the text but also on the teacher's attitude towards it and its introduction. For this reason, it is beneficial to choose tales which will keep the students entertained as well.

⁷⁰ LAZAR, p. 55, 2010

⁷¹ NUTTALL, p. 171, 2005

⁷² NUTTALL, p. 177, 2005

⁷³ GÓMEZ, p. 38, 2010

⁷⁴ NUTTALL, p. 177, 2005

3.2 Difficulties

Despite its being one of the most significant parts and necessary abilities in English language learning, reading is complicated to learn. It entails several challenges that must be overcome slowly as a part of the learning process. This chapter outlines the key challenges that nearly every class has when learning reading comprehension. It is undoubtedly essential for teachers to know about them and be prepared that even reading a fascinating story may turn into problematic moments. The content of this chapter is primarily based on the evaluation of a questionnaire revolving around the question: *What problems do students have during reading activities?* This provides authentic data from the school environment and real situations which occur when working with texts.

As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, motivation is a fundamental element of teaching. When there is a lack of motivation, learning activities may not be as productive as they could be, and the same is especially true when it comes to reading. Students tend to be uninterested in reading in the first place, and many of them may approach it as a boring task to do. This obstacle can be tackled by using stories in the lesson correctly. Nonetheless, it also depends on the students themselves, for it is not possible to make everyone enthusiastic about children's literature. The initial reluctance may be put down to insufficient reading comprehension of the students in general, which means not only in foreign language but also in Czech. Even though reading is regarded as the most elementary area of knowledge, it may not be so natural among learners. This results in a situation when the students are unable to comprehend a text not only during the learning process but also during examinations.⁷⁵ For this reason, they do not understand what they are reading, and it may be extremely challenging for them to get even the primary meaning.

Apart from this, the educational setting in the class may also be detrimental to reading with comprehension because students are often limited by time and by the others. It takes longer for some of them to deal with the excerpts, so they are not able to keep up the pace. Such circumstances can cause a lack of concentration and excitement for working on follow-up activities. However, the issue of being focused on the reading may concern

⁷⁵ CHANDRAN, Yomana and Parilah M. SHAH. Identifying Learners' Difficulties in ESL Reading Comprehension. *Creative Education* [online]. 2019, 10 (13), 3372-3384 [cit. 2022-04-24]. ISSN 2151-4755. Available from: doi:10.4236/ce.2019.1013259

even faster students, mainly because working with the text is a silent and individual exercise. One of the answers from the questionnaire refers to the fact that students may not be interested in the reading tasks because they are simply lazy. Since they already know how much effort it takes to understand and go through the text, there is no desire on their part to continue with the work. Therefore, the story and the activities should be precisely explained to them, so they are aware of their benefits and importance.

Problems concerning reading aloud are to be found in this thesis chapter Methods of Reading; however, teachers in the questionnaire reflected on another one. That is the feeling of embarrassment when students read in front of the whole class. Some of them may be shy, and being the centre of attention may cause mistakes which they would not make when reading alone. Hence the intonation, linking, and pronunciation of English words may be neglected on their part.

The last issue which will be described is the understanding and translation of the text. Some teachers tell their students to translate the text after they have read it. This is certainly a good way of checking their comprehension, but the results may not be as helpful. It can lead the students to translating each word individually and consequently ending up with a literal word-by-word translation instead of working with whole phrases and the context. While looking up new words and practising with a dictionary can be effective, many students overuse it to the point that it detracts from the enjoyment of the reading course. Students should know that it is acceptable to skip most of the words unless they are essential for the entire story.⁷⁶

3.3 Children's Stories in Textbooks

Since reading is one of the language skills, it should be incorporated in the textbooks which are used in teaching language. This chapter analyses the representation of reading comprehension tasks in three textbooks which were chosen based on the answers from the questionnaire. This includes *Happy Street 2*, *Your Space 4*, and *Project 5*. The

⁷⁶ Exploring Reading, BARFIELD in BAMFORD, Julian and Richard R. DAY. *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language*. 7th. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. ISBN 978-0-521-01651-3., p. 20

evaluation does not focus only on children's stories but also on other articles, their topics and suitability for students.

3.3.1 *Happy Street 2*

MAIDMENT, Stella and Lorena ROBERTS. *Happy Street 2: New Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-19-475107-0.

Even though this textbook does not contain excerpts from any children's books, there are many stories and articles which serve to support reading skills. There are many comics divided into three main stories: a comic introducing every new chapter, *Colin in Computerland*, and *Clive the Caveman*. Each of them deals with slightly different matters. For instance, the one which starts each unit narrates about the topic used in the following exercises. It is a good way of presenting a new topic to the students, since it pre-teaches vocabulary and phrases which are important for the following lesson. There is also a frequent use of songs and chants that may improve a natural memorization of the language. *Happy Street 2* does not, however, involve children's stories, as has been mentioned earlier. On the other hand, it demonstrates one cross-curricular link, called Looking at Books. The whole page introduces the cover of the book by Mark Twain *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. It encourages the students to read and shows them all the important details which are written on the book cover. It is followed by open questions inviting the students to predict the story. This may well serve as an introduction for further work with the storyline if the teacher decides so. Moreover, the textbook works with short articles, such as a weather forecast, the solar system, or life in Great Britain. These are certainly important issues for children to be aware of, particularly the younger ones for whom the book is intended.

3.3.2 *Your Space 4*

HOBBS, Martyn, Julia Starr KEDDLE, Martina HOLKOVÁ, and Lucie BETÁKOVÁ. *Your Space 4: Hybridní učebnice: Angličtina pro základní školy a víceletá gymnázia*. 2. vydání. Plzeň: Fraus, 2020. Škola s nadhledem. ISBN 978-80-7489-609-5.

Many articles on diverse themes are included in the *Your Space 4* textbook. Unlike the previous book, this one is intended for older students, eighth- or ninth-graders. Each text is followed by activities that help to enhance the language skills and improve the

comprehension of the content. Some of the exercises require the use of scanning and skimming techniques, so the students have the opportunity to practise them. Most of the topics are highly beneficial for children; for instance, articles about preventing bullying, information about life in other parts of the world, or opinions that the students would promote if they were world leaders. Yet, it is up to the teachers to select the most appropriate articles, as some of them may cover issues that are no longer relevant, such as writing blogs.

None of the units contains children's literature stories; nevertheless, there is one tale at the very end of the book. This story suggests that it should be used as an extensive reading practise because it is not related to any exercises. Martyn Hobbs, one of the textbook's writers, produced a short narrative called *On the Dark Side of the Moon*, which is complemented by colourful illustrations that are essential for students to understand. Although the text's horizontal arrangement may not be practical for reading, it can provide a unique experience to using the book. Even the sci-fi genre was selected to capture the interest of as many students as possible, since adventurous stories are most engaging for lots of them.

3.3.3 *Project 5*

HUTCHINSON, Tom, Michaela TRNOVÁ, Lara Mitchell STORTON, Mike SAYER, and Usoa SOL. *Project 5*. Fourth edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-19-476469-8.

The *Project* textbooks are the most commonly used in the Czech Republic for teaching English, especially at elementary schools. This edition includes diverse reading topics in the form of dialogues, articles, and stories. Some of the themes may not be as enjoyable for the students as those in the *Your Space 4* book because they can be considered obsolete. This is not, of course, only the case of this book; as many textbook authors do not manage to predict modern developments and trends which are now popular with current students. The relevance of topics is essential. This book also introduces the issue of bullying and the story of a boy who experienced it. There are texts about history, for example, *The Silk Road* and *English Language*. Other interesting readings include *Education in the USA* and *Biology*, which discusses the biological clock.

Each unit end is concluded with reading sections. These provide short children's stories, longer pieces of writing, and drama, so there is a plenty of material for reading even outside class. Additionally, at the end of the textbook, there are other stories, each connected to one unit. They are very different from each other, so there is no risk of monotony. Teachers can choose any of them and work with them without worrying whether they are appropriate for their students.

To conclude, each textbook presents children's literature in a different way, which illustrates the importance of this source in learning a foreign language. *Happy Street 2* does not contain any excerpts but supports the use of stories as additional material to the book. The second evaluated textbook, *Your Space 4*, is focused more on working with exercises and speaking; consequently, reading matter is not often represented here. Even though there is a well-written adventurous story at the end, it can be easily overlooked. From the three evaluated books, *Project 5* includes the most stories and articles together with other skills to practice. In this case, the teacher needs to carefully choose only some of them because more reading material does not necessarily mean better teaching.

3.4 How to Create a Lesson Plan

Creating lesson plans is a significant part of the teaching job. The whole learning experience is based on how the lessons are planned and organized. The problem is that although there are a few general rules for what should traditionally be present in the lesson, the essence of it is left on the individual teachers. The freedom in creating lessons allows teachers to make the most of the creativity and potential of the students. However, in some cases, independence may have negative consequences. The countless activities which can be used often lead to disorganisation and illogical arrangement of education. Even though there are lots of materials, coursebooks, and manuals to help, it is the teachers' responsibility to know what to look for and how not to get lost. This chapter provides several basic pieces of advice and suggestions to keep in mind while creating a lesson plan based on using children's literature. The presented information is intended to benefit those who wish to start using stories in their classes. Nevertheless, experienced teachers in this field may also find here some inspiring ideas.

The basic considerations which must be taken into account are the length of the lesson and the students' age. What is also essential for a meaningful flow of language teaching

is goal setting. Every literary work offers different possibilities of using it; hence it pays off to examine it carefully. Keeping in mind that it can be used to practise any language skill also helps with deciding for the right text. The goals must be defined clearly and appropriately and must be relevant to the school curriculum. Once the desired outcome of using the literary text in class is clear, it is time to prepare the accompanying activities. The choice of activities depends on the method the teacher would like to use. Everyone has a distinct approach; thus, it is useful to adjust the planning to fit one's teaching style.

The practical division of the lesson is into three parts. Each part contains exercises supporting reading comprehension, including pre-reading activities, activities during reading, and post-reading.⁷⁷ New vocabulary and phrases can be tackled either in the introduction or in the middle of the lesson. Some teachers may prefer presenting new language items in context during reading.⁷⁸ However, when students see the new language in advance, they remember it more easily. The teacher should consider what the most difficult part for the learners will be and decide how to prepare the worksheets accordingly. The materials should help with understanding the register, new vocabulary, grammar structures, and overall meaning. There are many ways to create interesting material based on the story text. Every narrative offers a variety of options to work with, so it is worth keeping in mind when choosing the text.

Apart from introducing new vocabulary, the pre-reading part of the lesson may include a brief presentation about the author of the work and the period in which the story takes place.⁷⁹ The students should know what the story is about when working only with an extract. It is necessary for them to be familiar with the topic, characters, and plot. Such a beginning of the lesson motivates the students to read the text and allows them to connect with it in the following sections of the lesson.⁸⁰ One way to involve the students is to provide many opportunities for them to come up with their own creative ideas. This may be applied in predicting the story based on its cover picture. Emphasizing the students' own thoughts about it is an efficient start of the story introduction.⁸¹ The students can

⁷⁷ LAZAR, G. *Literature and Language Teaching. A guide for teachers and trainers*. CUP, 2010, p. 83

⁷⁸ NUTTALL, 2005, p. 156

⁷⁹ LAZAR, 2010, p. 83

⁸⁰ NUTTALL, 2005, p. 156

⁸¹ NUTTALL, 2005, p. 152

compare their suggestions with each other and then with the summary of the whole story. They can also make up the name of the book.

It is the teachers' responsibility to choose the right reading strategy in the middle part of the lesson. Older students may prefer silent reading on their own or silent reading accompanied by listening to the audio recording; however, this depends on the content of the worksheets and tasks as well. Alternatively, individual silent reading could be used. For further information about reading methods, see the chapter *Methods of Reading*.

Getting to know the story and the chosen excerpt is vital for the reading part of the lesson. The process of reading is the basis for all the following tasks. Even though the core of the lesson is working with the text, it does not mean that reading should be the only practised skill. It is a matter of the aim of the particular lesson.⁸² Collie and Slater suggest several different exercises for practising each language skill based on the story read. It includes writing, such as summarizing, creating posters, or different kinds of debates and developing various theories about the text.⁸³ The reading stage of the lesson may also cover introducing the new vocabulary and pronunciation and explaining the grammar if needed.

The post-reading part should develop the students' newly gained knowledge and practise it with the various activities. A very common concept in teaching foreign languages is the use of worksheets and handouts. Even though their preparation is highly time-consuming, there are numerous advantages of creating ones tailored specifically to the teacher's needs.

The first step of implementing literature and reading in a lesson is the choice which book the teacher will use. Choosing the right story is vital because that is where all the following tasks come from.⁸⁴ Several criteria which the teacher should keep in mind have to be fulfilled while selecting the text. The criteria are specified in the previous chapter. When working with a long text, such as a novel, a suitable section must be chosen.⁸⁵ The length of the text must be proportional to the amount of time the teacher intends to devote

⁸² NUTTALL, 2005, p. 149

⁸³ COLIE, SLATER, 2011, pp. 58,72

⁸⁴ NUTTALL, 205, p. 170

⁸⁵ COLLIE, SLATER 2011, p. 37

to reading it in the class.⁸⁶ Since novels have many interesting chapters, it is not always easy to select only one passage to be used. The engagement of learners may heavily depend on it. For this reason, it is preferable to organize class activities around the book's main points, such as plot twists or crucial sequences that deepen character development.⁸⁷

Whereas short stories share similar features with novels, their length may be more workable during the lesson. Many stories of various genres are available, so it is possible to motivate students more by alternating what they read each time. In spite of their succinct storyline, it is more challenging to be captivated by a short story. It should be noted that short stories require the teacher to prepare more specific activities in comparison to novels.⁸⁸

After managing all the prepared tasks, a proper ending of the lesson is required. The teacher should sum up the new language which has been taught and ask students for feedback. The students may give oral feedback or they can fill in a brief questionnaire regarding points about the story, their enjoyment, and other aspects of the class. The teacher can also check together with the students answers from the lesson, assign work to be done at home, or provide other reading.⁸⁹ The whole lesson should be engaging and most important, it should show the students that it is possible to learn naturally through stories.

⁸⁶ NUTTALL, 2005, p. 150

⁸⁷ COLLIE, SLATER, 2011, p. 37

⁸⁸ COLLIE, SLATER, 2011, p. 197

⁸⁹ COLLIE, SLATER, 2011, p. 37

4 *The Ice Monster* by David Walliams

For a sample lesson plan based on children’s literature, the novel called *The Ice Monster* was selected, written by David Walliams, who is a famous children’s author from the United Kingdom. Since he has written several successful books, students may be already familiar with him. This fact may help with their engagement at the very beginning of the lesson. The selected story offers a unique insight into London in 1899, which is the setting of the novel, and this period is clearly introduced to the readers. Furthermore, Queen Victoria appears in the novel as one of the main characters, which illustrates the history even more specifically. Students learn about life during that time, which could be sometimes challenging, especially for the main character Elsie, who has no home. As a result, the readers can see a huge difference between socioeconomic classes and appreciate the value of belonging, as the girl discovers a group of people to which she could belong. It depicts the kindness of her heart and her determination, which she shows through actions she believes in, even though they may not be in within the law. The readers follow the development of a true friendship, brave characters, and get more curious about the denouement of the plot. For this and many other reasons, this book is very suitable for use in class. The storyline moves fast, so the students are motivated in finding out what happens next. What is more, it is written in a humorous and absurd style, which may contrast well to the often formal school environment.

5 Evaluation of a Questionnaire

The questionnaire was conducted to obtain data about the current usage of literature in English lessons at elementary schools in the Czech Republic. It was created on the platform Survio.com and sent via email to schools located especially in the Hradec Králové district.

A link to the questionnaire was sent to approximately fifty schools with a polite request for help with my research and the instructions that English teachers should fill in the questionnaire. Fifteen teachers from the selected schools were contacted individually, since their email addresses were directly available. Twelve responses were received, which did not suffice for adequate qualitative research; nevertheless, they served well for creating a lesson based on children's literature. The insufficient number of returned questionnaires may be related to the omission of not specifying an exact number of questionnaires which are required for research and to the fact that the questionnaire was only delivered electronically, which is not possible to control well. It was not possible to visit schools in person at the time when the questionnaire was in circulation due to the pandemic restrictions. However, for future research, it would be worth visiting several schools in person and, with permission of their directors, collect answers from individual English teachers directly.

1) What textbooks do you use in teaching English?

Response	Number of respondents
Project	5
Your Space	2
New Challenges, Project	1
Hello, Kids!, Project	1
Happy House, Happy Street, Project	1
Happy House, Project	1
Empower, New English File, Complete Advanced	1

These responses confirm that the *Project* textbooks are utilized the most in Czech schools. On the other hand, the *Project* is also used in combination with other textbooks, which shows that other books, such as *Your Space* or *Happy House*, are used as well. This information was valuable when selecting textbooks for literature analysis.

2) Do these textbooks contain literary works or articles?

Response	Number of respondents
Yes.	4
Yes, they do. Articles about animals, daily life, friends, inventions, environment...	1
There are articles, but only short ones related to the topics of the units. At the end there are a few longer articles – mostly fairy tales.	1
Rarely.	1
A little.	1
No.	1
I can't recall a concrete book, but there are folk tales, like Robin Hood, or fables.	1
Both.	1
Articles.	1

Only one response claims that the textbooks do not contain any literary texts, which means that there is a majority of those providing reading comprehension to some extent, either in the way of articles or tales. Textbooks are a great way of introducing such materials to students, and their authors are aware of their importance.

3) Do you use your own materials and worksheets in lessons?

Response	Number of respondents
Yes.	3
Yes, they are much better to motivate my students and to encourage them to work harder. Authentic materials have always worked wonders.	1
Yes, I love them.	1
Yes, I do. Sometimes. It depends on the topic and the way the book explains and trains it.	1

Yes. For practising.	1
Yes, especially for topical issues.	1
Yes, a lot. It helps me customize teaching for the group or individuals.	1
Yes, a lot. I prefer variety during lessons.	1
Sometimes I use my materials because they are different.	1
Always – because I don't find Project textbooks interesting enough.	1

This question was asked to find out whether teachers commonly use different materials than those in textbooks in their lessons. All the answers prove the significance of using a variety of sources for teaching to avoid boredom or outdated topics. It helps to adjust lessons precisely according to the students' needs, which is essential to get results and practise the desired skills well. Especially the second-listed answer deserves attention because it says that different materials even enhance the students' motivation; furthermore, it emphasizes the use of authentic materials, which "*have always worked wonders*". Consequently, teachers should not choose only texts intended for students of English but also those for native speakers, which may be more rewarding in the end.

4) Do you use literary works in your lessons?

Response	Number of respondents
Sometimes.	2
Yes, tales.	1
Yes, occasionally.	1
Yes, I love them.	1
Yes.	1
Stories and poems.	1
Stories.	1
Sometimes tales and stories.	1
Only those in the textbooks.	1
No.	1
I use poems, tales, short narratives, sometimes students create their own.	1

Most of the respondents work with literature in their lessons, which was not expected. It shows that it is possible to apply this method in class and that it only depends on the teachers and their willingness devote time to stories in their lessons. Furthermore, there is a great suggestion by one respondent, who suggests creating one's own stories with students. This activity involves them personally and supports their interest and effort in learning a language.

5) If you work with literature, give examples of texts you use.

Response	Number of respondents
Tales, stories, songs...	1
Oliver Twist.	1
Nothing yet.	1
No.	1
Jekyll and Hyde.	1
I use Graded Readers most of the time, by Vintage Readers or Penguin Readers, or any other authentic texts.	1
For example: Robin Hood, plots of Dickens's books, tried to read Doyle's Lost World – too long, kids considered it old-fashioned. I usually use the plot.	1
Fairy tales.	1
Do not use.	1
Classic fairy tales.	1
Classic ones mostly.	1
American authors... Shakespeare...	1

None of the respondents mentioned contemporary literary works when they provided examples of their selections. Teachers choose mainly classic literature, which is not considered a wrong decision. By using classics, the teachers can be sure that they are working with high-quality piece of writing. On the other hand, such a selection may be counterproductive, as stated in one of the responses, which explains that students may regard it as old-fashioned and not engaging enough. There should always be a variation in using literary texts.

6) Do you think reading is important for learning English? Why?

Response	Number of respondents
Yes, of course. It is the perfect way to improve English.	1
Yes, it is. However, in my opinion, the ability of speaking and listening comprehension is more important. Reading is important to improve understanding of written English and for the enrichment of one's vocabulary.	1
Yes, it can improve use of English and speaking.	1
Yes, I do. It is a practice.	1
Yes, I do. It is important for vocabulary and learning the correct pronunciation of words.	1
Yes, giving final sense.	1
To gain vocabulary and usage of English.	1
There has been research conducted that reading is the best way to acquire L2, so yes.	1
Expands general comprehension, logical thinking, and vocabulary without "work".	1
Exactly, it helps students to improve their speaking and writing skills.	1
Definitely yes. It helps understand words in context, helps practise vocabulary.	1
Definitely – helps to understand the language.	1

All the respondents agree that reading is necessary and relevant for learning a foreign language. It strengthens the active use of vocabulary they are learning and their logical thinking. Additionally, speaking can also be improved by this technique; however, each skill must be practised equally to develop English as a whole means of communication.

7) If you do not use literature in your classes, what is the reason?

Response	Number of respondents
I use it.	6
Sometimes there is no suitable text for a given topic.	1
Not time enough to get through all obligatory topics.	1
I am not into it.	1

Downside: a lot of older children don't find reading "fun" but "work".	1
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Most teachers use literature in their classes and those who do not state several reasons why. Finding a suitable text for the required topic may be problematic, especially when the teacher needs to practise specific issues. Searching for an appropriate story may be highly time demanding, as the whole process of using stories effectively in lessons may be. Accordingly, time is another factor which restricts these activities. There are lots of requirements on what the students must know to be prepared for all the exams that they need to take in the future. Clearly, the goal of language learning should not be only preparing for tests; unfortunately, the school system may promote this approach more than others. The last reason mentioned by one of the respondents involves a lack of interest in literature on the part of the teacher, which illustrates the importance not only of the students' engagement but also of that of the teachers. They should enjoy the lessons the same as their learners, so there is no point in using literature if they do not consider it enjoyable themselves.

8) Do you know in what book genres or specific book titles students are currently interested?

Response	Number of respondents
Yes, literature for teenage girls, superhero comics, manga.	1
Sci-fi, romantic stories, common problems of teenagers.	1
Sci-fi, feminist sci-fi, detectives, historical documentaries.	1
Sci-fi and comics.	1
Only some of them read.	1
No, I haven't got an idea.	1
No.	1
Mostly fantasy genre.	1
I try to keep pace with each class but it's not always easy. That changes every year.	1
It depends on the students. Some of my students like Japanese comics, some of them modern English poetry...	1
I did a survey in my class – kids love Gangsta Granny.	1

Food, movies, traditions, celebration of birthdays, animals.	1
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Genres which students enjoy are mostly those providing adventurous plot and including characters whom children can relate to. Several responses confirm this statement, and three respondents even wrote sci-fi as the first example in their answers. Therefore, the short story by Martin Hopps in the *Your Space* textbook is well chosen and can probably draw many students' attention. Nevertheless, popular genres change quickly, so it is necessary to ask English learners what they like often. The answer mentioning *Gangsta Granny* as an example of a popular book inspired the idea of choosing a novel by the same author for the purpose of this thesis.

9) Do students enjoy activities related to literature and reading?

Response	Number of respondents
Yes.	3
Yes, they mostly do.	1
Yes, but it is never interesting for all students in the class. It also depends on their mood.	1
Sometimes.	1
Some of them. Some students like it, but most of them don't.	1
Not really, most of them don't see the point.	1
Not really.	1
Most of them yes.	1
It depends on the chosen text, in general, stories and realia-related readings are usually found enjoyable.	1
I am not sure.	1

The answers to this question vary, as some are positive, some negative, and others are somewhere in between. In conclusion, it depends on the students in the class, their current mood, their level of English, and their teacher's attitude towards reading. Learners should also be well aware of the benefits of reading to better understand the purpose and effectiveness of this activity. If introducing the reading properly and providing an engaging story fails to motivate the students, they should not be forced to do activities they dislike, since language learning offers countless other methods.

10) What problems do students have during these activities?

Response	Number of respondents
They haven't got any problems.	1
They are lazy to read.	1
The main problems are misunderstanding of words, fear of speaking in front of other students, and literal translation into Czech.	1
The lack of connected speech, mistakes in pronunciation, slow reading.	1
Staying concentrated.	1
Sometimes the level adjustments might be too difficult, so it might be difficult for them to go through the books themselves.	1
Reading skill.	1
Reading comprehension.	1
Reading and understanding.	1
Most of them with pronunciation.	1
Don't know the vocabulary.	1
Do not use.	1

The respondents mention several problems related to the use of reading in lessons. They are analysed in greater detail in the chapter Difficulties.

11) In your opinion, what are the best methods for learning English?

Response	Number of respondents
TPR activities, communicative methods (based on speaking), learning and practice of vocabulary through games.	1
Speaking, using flash cards, singing.	1
Speaking, pair work, group work, use interesting topics.	1
Reading, as I said (research).	1
More speaking, reading, PC.	1
Interest in English, lessons at school and watching films in English, listening to music in English.	1

Go abroad.	1
Find what your class/group likes and go for it (online activities, music, films).	1
Combination of all methods and speaking and speaking...	1
Can't answer here – use it / read it / listen to it as much as possible.	1
Be in touch with English every day.	1
Basics of grammar, vocabulary, and lots of listening.	1

These answers show the variety of methods which can be used when learning a new language. Speaking is repeated several times because it may be regarded as the most difficult skill, since there is no time for thinking about the structures that the learners want to say. It is the most common means of communication as well because unlike writing or reading, people speak every day. For this reason, it should be well practised in schools as part of teaching a foreign language. In addition, it should be noted that there is not a single correct method and everybody gains the required knowledge by different techniques.

6 Realization of a Lesson Plan

A lesson plan for teaching English at elementary school was created, using the children's novel *The Ice Monster* by David Walliams. The theme of the story is suitable for students of various ages, which was a decisive factor in my choice of the text, as I did not know in which grade the lesson will be taught. Other challenges in its preparation were the lack of information about the students, their previous experience with English, their interests, or their behaviour. Ultimately, following a communication with the teacher at the school where the lesson plan was to be realized, I was informed that I would have the opportunity to teach ninth-graders with a high level of English. The exercises in the lesson plan and the choice of vocabulary were accordingly adapted to this age and level. However, there were still a lot of variables I had to guess about the group; therefore, the content of the lesson had to be suitable for a large range of students' interests. The novel contains brief chapters, so it was possible to work with a whole chapter. Chapter 32 was chosen because it represents the culmination of the story, bringing a mammoth to life, around which the main plot in the novel revolves. There is lots of action and tension; therefore, the readers get easily involved, even though they do not know the rest of the story.

The initial plan of the lesson included all the skills of language learning; nevertheless, it would not be feasible to manage all of them in one session. First, it was important to prepare a proper book introduction. I aimed to involve the students' creativity, so their task would be to write down what they think the story may be about based on its cover picture. They would also be asked to describe the picture, say what they see, and determine which details could suggest the story development and the title of the story. To involve everyone into this activity, I planned for the students to write their ideas down and share them with the class afterwards. For practising speaking, they would work in pairs and discuss what the picture can represent.

The accompanying presentation projected on the whiteboard would show a summary of the story, so the children could read it and compare it with their assumptions. They would be continually asked whether they understand and would provide a spoken summary of what they read to assure the teacher that they comprehend the text correctly. The main part of the lesson would be reading the chosen chapter. This part needs to be introduced as well because the readers must know which point of the story they are going to work

with, so they would be able to connect it with the previous events in the storyline. This issue would be tackled by a short statement displayed before the reading activity.

Four reading methods would be utilized during the lesson: intensive reading, scanning, silent reading along with a recording, and skimming. Since the audio available for this story is excellently narrated, it should also enhance the students' engagement in the story. Before starting to work on the skimming part of the lesson, the plan was to introduce all the selected vocabulary by definitions and examples projected on the whiteboard and ask the students whether they understand everything. One of the problems at this point could be that the students would already know all the expressions, so the task would not be challenging for them in any way. On the other hand, it could well serve as practising. When choosing the words to look for in the text, I decided for collocations useful for the everyday use of language but also for the context of the chapter. Additionally, the situation in which the words are used would be emphasized, for it is not efficient to learn vocabulary out of context.

Character description would be another task for the students. To prevent complications which could be caused by the fact that they would not know any vocabulary used for describing and characterizing literary characters, all the words would be written in the worksheet, and the students would correctly connect them to each character. Again, the definitions and sentence examples of each word would be on the whiteboard, so everyone could check the meaning during the exercise. Moreover, they would be asked to choose two of the new words and use them in their own sentences to remember them better.

The listening part of the lesson plan is based on the section of the book where Queen Victoria appears. The students would be briefly acquainted with this ruler, who reigned in this period, and with who her husband was. It is the excerpt where the queen sees the ice monster for the first time, and the students would be asked to say what her reaction was and think about her attitude towards the animal. Apart from this, two other collocations were chosen for the students to learn and guess what they mean in this context.

Like the previous exercise, the last activity would be completed only if there is spare time in the lesson. Since I have little experience in teaching, I could not estimate precisely how much time each task would take. The final activity would support the students' fantasy in

that the students would be asked to imagine living in 1899, the year when the story takes place. In the story, the characters have to build a hot air balloon for reviving the mammoth with the help of a flash of lightning. The students would be shown the professor's plan for this action, and their task would be to guess which materials the professor and the other characters used.

There would be a conclusion at the end of the lesson, summarizing what the students have learnt, with a special focus on the segments which could be problematic in the process. Moreover, the students would be asked to write a short feedback on the lesson.

Before starting to teach the lesson according to the plan, I introduced myself to the class and explained the purpose of the lesson plan, since it is important for the students to know why they are being taught certain things. I have told them that reading is one of the best methods to acquire a foreign language naturally and have asked how many of them like to read. Three out of fifteen students raised their hands, which was a number I had expected. After this, the introduction of the novel followed, and I showed the students the picture of the author and his most famous book, *Gangsta Granny*. Some of the students were familiar with this narrative, which may have helped them to get a better idea of the literary material I used for the session. They had no problems when describing the cover picture, they were able to name almost everything in it, and I only had to help them with the words "mammoth" and "lantern", which the girl is holding in her hand.

After the warm-up, I provided the students with the worksheets and asked them to come up with ideas what the story may be about. Unfortunately, I forgot to ask them to work in pairs and discuss, so everyone worked individually in silence. At first, they seemed to struggle a little, but I gave them enough time to think about their answers. I had expected that they would have interesting ideas, but when I asked two students, they apologized because they could not think of anything. This may be put down to the school setting and the pressure that the students may feel when they are asked to do something in a specific time. However, it may also indicate a lack of support for innovative thinking as well as a fear of the students as to whether they have the right answer, even when it is evident that there is no single correct solution. It also depends on the individual attitude of each student because other answers were great. Additionally, I failed to ask the students to come up with a title for the narrative, so I moved on to introduce what the story was about.

I let the learners read each slide of the story summary in silence and then asked them to summarize what they have read to make sure that all of them understand. To be safe, I repeated the story again to ensure that everyone was familiar with the plot and characters. Everyone seemed to understand, so I could move on to the reading of the selected chapter. The students were asked to read the introduction, and again I asked some of them what they learnt in the text, so they could practice speaking and expressing the meaning of the text. They were instructed to scan the material after becoming acquainted with the chapter. Almost all of them began reading as they normally would, which was however not the aim of scanning. I had to explain that they were just supposed to glance at the text to get a sense of what they would be dealing with. Then I played the chapter recording, so the learners could follow along with the text; and finally, I asked them whether they liked the story. Several students nodded, so I hoped the topic was appropriate for their age group, since that was one of my concerns.

The activities presenting vocabulary followed the text, and I found out that the students knew many of the chosen expressions, so they had no problem working with them. I showed them definitions of all the selected expressions and left them on the whiteboard while they were searching for them in the excerpt. The second task focused on vocabulary was also without complications. Most of the terms were familiar to the students, but some were new to them as well. I noticed one misspelled word in my worksheet, so I let the students find and correct it. I thought this would be difficult, but one student was quick to find the answer, so there was no need for any hints. During the teaching process, I decided that it would be more beneficial to use the words of appearance and personality in phrases and only then link them to each character. I showed sample sentences on the screen and asked the students whether they understood the words and whether the task was clear, after which they were to choose two words and use them in their sentences. Only one student could not think of any sentence, so I helped her to produce a simple example. Others had no problem; nevertheless, many of them chose only one word instead of two. As there was not enough time to start a new activity, the students were asked to connect the description with each story character, and then the solutions were displayed on the screen. The very last thing I managed to ask the students was to write feedback on the lesson. There was no time left for a proper ending of the lesson, which should be better managed in future.

Surprisingly, the realisation of the lesson did not entirely differ from my expectation. What helped immensely was the behaviour of the students, who were not disruptive at all and seemed to be interested in learning English in general. However, due to the silence in the classroom, it was not possible for me to say whether the selected topic was entertaining for them. For this reason, I wanted the students to write their thoughts on the lesson. Even though their opinions on the lesson were positive, they should be asked about it more specifically, saying what exactly they had learnt and considered valuable. Interestingly, two of the students implied that because they did not know me, the whole class was shy, so they did not cooperate as they usually do. This observation only supports the fact that the relationship between teachers and their students is the core of the whole teaching process. Nonetheless, the class participated greatly, and they gave the impression that they were not used to such type of English lessons. In next lessons, I would like to incorporate more speaking activities, so each student would have the opportunity to speak.

Conclusion

This thesis examined the use of children's literature in English language teaching classes and showed how literary texts could be incorporated in them. Children at the age of ten to fifteen have highly developed abilities to work with texts and comprehend their meaning; for this reason, it is an appropriate group for using authentic children's stories, which can immensely benefit them on their language learning journey. On the other hand, they may tend to lose attention and motivation easily, so the stories need to be appropriately introduced to them. The selection of the story determines their engagement in the whole lesson, so it must be carefully chosen. The best way to decide which book to use would be to ask what the given group of students prefer. However, if this is not an option, there are several criteria which may significantly help with choosing the text. Children's literature includes several subgenres and topics which could interest almost anyone, which is one of its greatest benefits. In addition, its uncomplicated language and fun plots may help readers to get immersed in the story. As a result, the learners acquire new language in a natural way, which is a fundamental means for its development. Reading improves not only reading skills but when the literature-based lesson is well and efficiently prepared, it can also practise all the language skills, which are undoubtedly crucial for the language development. Furthermore, reading enhances also cognitive thinking and dealing with various situations, for it presents countless different situations which the protagonists must overcome. It also incorporates many topics for discussion, so speaking can be practised as well.

There are many obstacles connected to reading activities in a foreign language. For instance, literal translation, frequent looking up of the unknown words, or lack of understanding. With practice, it is possible to reduce the occurrence of these issues, although it requires time and patience. An evaluation of the questionnaire has showed that teachers often use literary texts in their classes and many of them consider this method beneficial. According to their answers, most of them have agreed that there is not enough time to utilize reading or that their students do not enjoy reading activities. It is crucial to be aware of the fact that not everyone enjoys working with children's literature, even though it is an excellent source for learning. The lesson plan based on the story of *The Ice Monster* was taught without any major complications; however, there were some issues which could be improved in future teaching. One of them would be implementing

more speaking activities. Furthermore, it is important for students to have an established rapport with their teacher, so they work better and are not too shy to express their ideas.

In conclusion, there are a few difficulties which may make learning through children's literature difficult, but overall, the benefits it brings are significantly greater, and not only in learning English.

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Appendix

Figure no. 1: Worksheet

Children's Literature in Teaching English

- 1) Look at the cover picture. Write 1-3 sentences what the story may be about based on the picture.

- 2) What the title of the book could be? Write it down. What is the real title?

- 3) READ THE EXTRACT

CHAPTER 32

KNOCKED AWAKE

Introduction: Elsie, Dotty and professor managed to bring the mammoth to life. They used the lightning to restart its heart and melted the ice in which it was preserved. Dotty had to catch the flash of lightning during the storm. She had to fly for it in a hot-air balloon. The copper wire helped to transmit the electricity. Read about the first moment they meet the living ice monster. Is the mammoth going to hurt them?

Elsie wrenched the professor out of the way just in time before the mammoth's giant feet thumped on the floor.

SMASH!

"HOOO!" it cried.

"Why is it trying to kill us?" yelled the girl. "We just brought it back to life!"

"It's a wild beast!" replied the professor. "It's not going to say 'thank you'! Now, for goodness' sake, **HELP ME!**"

Elsie grabbed the old man under his armpits, and pulled him up the huge stone staircase that led upwards through the main hall. When the pair were a few steps up, the mammoth spun round and smashed into the *Diplodocus* skeleton.

CRASH!

Elsie ducked as the giant bones came thundering down all around them.

WHACK!

One struck the professor across the forehead, and knocked him out cold.

DOOF!

“PROFESSOR!” shouted Elsie. The girl slapped the old man across the face to wake him. When that didn’t work, she dragged him further up the stairs to escape the animal.

The mammoth began pacing towards them. It reached the bottom of the steps just as Elsie had managed to drag the professor halfway up.

Surely the creature could not follow them up the stairs?

To Elsie’s horror, it could.

“NO!” cried the girl.



Unsteadily, the mammoth rested its giant feet on the first step, then the second, then the third.

THUD! THUD! THUD!

In a rush to flee further up the steps, Elsie dropped the professor. His head hit the stone.

CLONK!

Normally, this would have been enough to knock someone out, but as he was already knocked out it actually had the opposite effect. It knocked him awake.

“Ouch!” he cried.

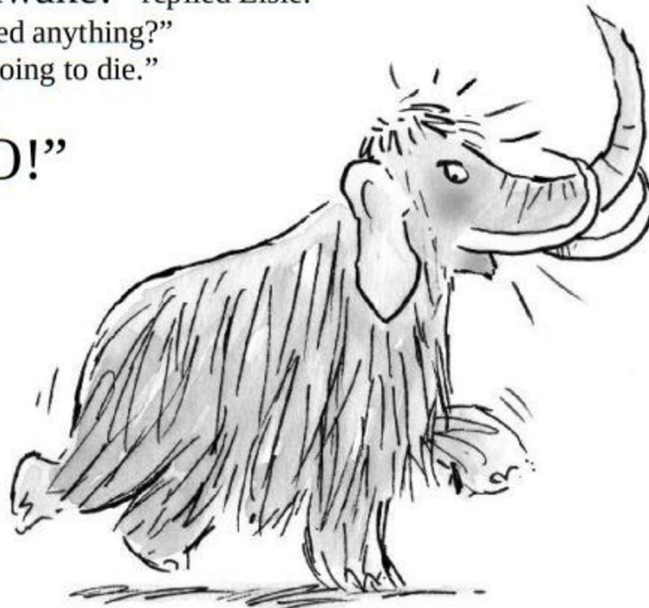
“You’re awake!” replied Elsie.

“Have I missed anything?”

“We’re still going to die.”

“Oh no.”

“HOOO!”



The mammoth let out its distinctive cry again, its trunk aloft and its sharp tusks now inches from the pair’s faces. The creature whisked its head back, as if getting ready to impale them.

“HELP!” cried the girl.

Just then, there was a mighty smash overhead.

KERBANG!

Dotty had crashed her hot-air balloon straight through the newly repaired stained-glass window of the main hall.

SMASH!

It descended at speed through the hall. The bottom of the wicker basket struck the mammoth hard on the head.

BOOF!

“HOOO!”

This cry sounded different. Like a cry of **fear**. The mammoth scuttled back down the steps and across the main hall to hide under the shadow of an archway.

Meanwhile, the basket landed with a thud and skidded across the floor, until it came to a sudden stop against the wall.

“**OOF!**” said Dotty. As the cleaning lady scrambled to her feet, she surveyed the scene. There were the scattered dinosaur bones, the shards of glass from the window and the tank, the pools of icy water, the broken basket and the hot-air balloon made of a thousand handkerchiefs and one pair of bloomers strewn across the floor.

“**Naughty mammoth!**” exclaimed Dotty. “Look at this mess! It will take me all night to clear this up!”

“Idiotic woman! That is the least of our troubles!” interrupted the professor. “The beast just tried to **kill** us. Isn’t that right, Elsie? **Elsie?**”

The professor looked over his shoulder, but the girl had gone.

“**Elsie?**” he called. “**ELSIE?**”

Unknown to him, the girl had made her way over to the archway to take a closer look at the mammoth.

“**KEEP BACK, YOU FOOLISH CHILD!**” shouted the professor.

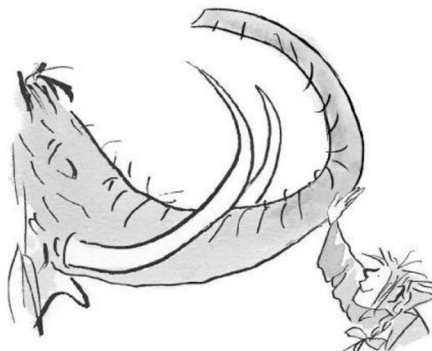
“Shush!” shushed the girl. “You’re frightening it.”

“**Whatever you do, don’t touch it!**” shouted the professor.

The brave little girl ignored him, and reached out her hand to meet the creature’s trunk. It was the only part of the mammoth that was not hidden in the darkness.

First, its trunk performed a little dance around the girl’s hand, like a snake being charmed. Then Elsie held out her hand flat, and something magical happened. The prehistoric met the modern.

The two touched.



4) Useful phrases and vocabulary, find the words in the text and write the sentences.

Keep in mind that the phrases may be used in a different form in the text.

Pull up – *Elsie grabbed the old man under his armpits, and pulled him up a huge stone staircase...*

Spin round –

Knock someone out cold –

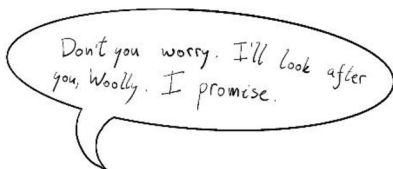
Slap across the face –

Trunk and tusks –

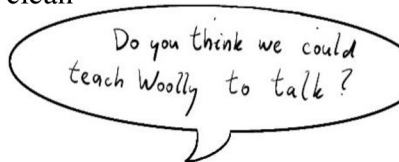
Impale –

5) Characters description. Match the words with the characters. You can use some words more than once.

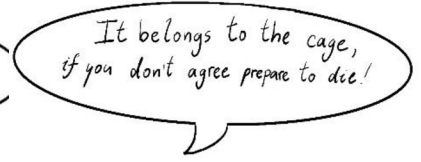
brave, evil-minded, proud, selfish, caring, lively, chubby, unkempt, grumpy, skinny, flabby, confident, strange, silly, clean



Elsie



Dotty



Professor

6) Choose two words and use them in sentences.

7) Listen carefully to the extract and answer the questions:

Queen Victoria sees the Ice monster for the first time. She is talking to the Lancaster, the director of the museum. He wants to impress her. What are her thoughts about the iced animal?

1) **The Queen Victoria thinks that the Ice monster is....**

- a. Too big to fit into the room
- b. Too small to be a monster
- c. Too cute to be a monster

2) **The mammoth is**

- a. An adult
- b. Very old
- c. A child

3) **Who was Queen Victoria's husband?**

- a. Prince Albert
- b. Prince Arthur
- c. Prince Alex

4) **How long has the creature been dead?**

- a. 10 000 years
- b. 1000 years
- c. 100 years

5) **What seems to be the most important for the Queen?**

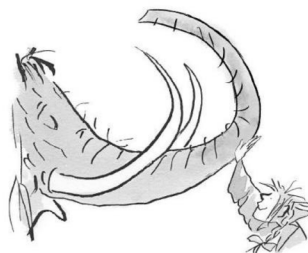
- a. Tea and cake time
- b. That the mammoth is dead
- c. The great job the Lancaster has done



8) **According to the phrase: „sweat was now pouring of brow “how did the Lancaster feel?**

9) **What does the “blindsided by the lady” refer to?**

- a. He was blinded by the shine of the Queen's jewellery
- b. He was pleased that the Queen liked the animal
- c. He was surprised by the unusual question the Queen had asked
- d. He was bored by the unusual question the Queen had asked



10) Imagine you live in 1899. What would you use to build a hot-air balloon and why? Circle your answers.



11) FEEDBACK

How did you enjoy the lesson? What did you like what didn't you like?

Figure no. 2: Cover of the book *The Ice Monster* by David Walliams, illustration by Tony Ross

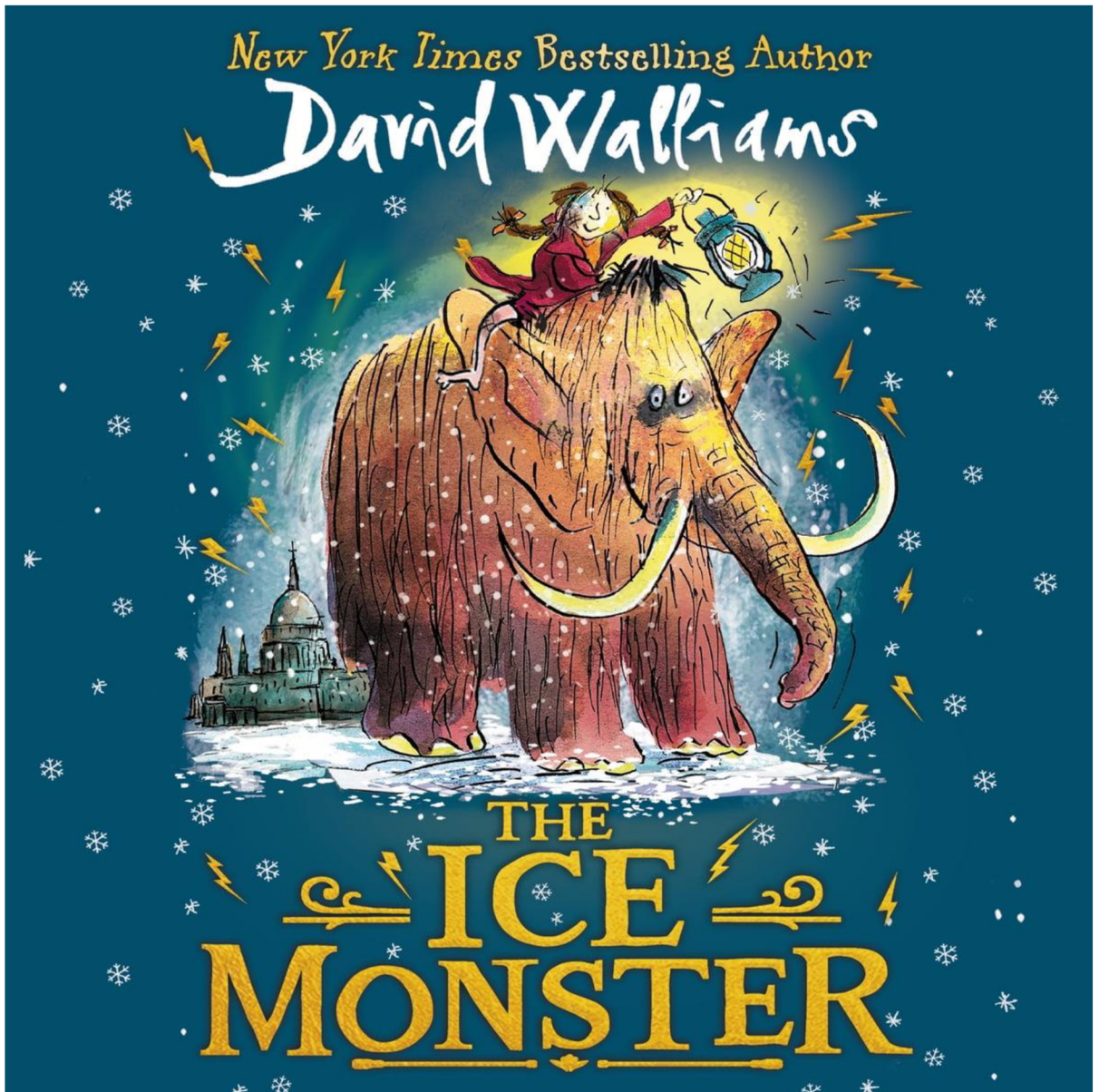


Figure no. 3: Exercise

1) Look at the cover picture. Write 1-3 sentences what the story may be about based on the picture. You may work in pairs.

It could be about time travelling

Figure no. 4: Exercise

1) Look at the cover picture. Write 1-3 sentences what the story may be about based on the picture. You may work in pairs.

The story could be about a mammoth that was frozen in an ice berg, but ~~so~~ suddenly came to life and became friends with a young girl.

2) What the title of the book could be? Write it down. What is the real title?

Figure no. 5: Exercise

1) Look at the cover picture. Write 1-3 sentences what the story may be about based on the picture. You may work in pairs.

It could be about friendship between a girl and mammoth.

Figure no. 6: Exercise

1) Look at the cover picture. Write 1-3 sentences what the story may be about based on the picture. You may work in pairs.

There is a girl riding on the mammoth holding light lamp in her hand. It is snowing, behind the mammoth are some buildings. The girl looks happy.

2) What the title of the book could be? Write it down. What is the real title?

Figure no. 7: Exercise

7) Characters description. Match the words with the characters. You can use some words more than once.

brave, evil-minded, proud, selfish, caring, lively, chubby, unkept, grumpy, skinny, flabby, confident, strange, silly, clean

Don't you worry. I'll look after you, Woolly. I promise.



Elsie

Do you think we could teach Woolly to talk?



Doty

It belongs to the cage, if you don't agree prepare to die!



Professor

brave
caring

chubby
silly
clean

slabby
grumpy
strange

8) Choose two words and use them in sentences.

She cares about her self, she is selfish.
~~She didn't clean her room~~
She cares about others

Figure no. 8: Exercise


7) Characters description. Match the words with the characters. You can use some words more than once.

brave, ~~evil-minded~~, proud, selfish, caring, lively, chubby, unkept, ^{Mr} grumpy, skinny, flabby, confident, ~~strange~~, silly, clean


Don't you worry. I'll look after you, Woolly. I promise.

Do you think we could teach Woolly to talk?


It belongs to the cage, if you don't agree prepare to die!



Elsie



Dotty



Professor

brave, ~~skinny~~, confident

chubby, silly, clean

evil-minded, selfish, grumpy, flabby, strange

8) Choose two words and use them in sentences.

He was enough confident to do it.
My friends are really caring and helping me.

Figure no. 9: Exercise

11) FEEDBACK
How did you enjoy the lesson? What did you like what didn't you like?

The lesson was really fun! Although it's a pity that most of us (students) were shy to talk or rise our hands up. But I really enjoyed this lesson :)

Figure no. 10: Exercise

11) FEEDBACK
How did you enjoy the lesson? What did you like what didn't you like?

I don't think it was bad, but ~~little~~ little boring, because of we don't know you. If we know you it would be more funny. But great job

Figure no. 11: Exercise

11) FEEDBACK
How did you enjoy the lesson? What did you like what didn't you like?

I liked a story about mammoth and even the lesson. Thank you for it!
I learned some new vocabulary and it was really different than other lessons.

Figure no. 12: Exercise

11) FEEDBACK
How did you enjoy the lesson? What did you like what didn't you like?

The lesson was very interesting - I like it. It was really good. Thank you 😊

Abstract

Bakalářská práce Dětská literatura ve výuce anglického jazyka se zaměřuje především na efektivní využití anglické literatury v hodinách na základních školách za účelem zdokonalení jazykových dovedností. Zkoumá, zda je možné dětské příběhy do výuky zařadit a jak mohou ovlivnit výukový proces žáků. Cílem práce je zhodnotit výhody a překážky spojené se čtením v cizím jazyce. Tyto informace byly získány analýzou odborné literatury dostupné k tomuto tématu a formou dotazníku. Na základě obou metod byl vytvořen výukový plán založen na vybrané dětské knize. Záměrem práce je rovněž prezentace reálného užití literatury a představení využití dětské literatury učitelům, kteří mají zájem o aplikování této aktivity do jejich výuky. Bakalářská práce se mimo jiné zabývá otázkou současného využití dětské literatury na základních školách v České republice.

První kapitola předkládá popis žáků druhého stupně, vyhodnocuje jejich celkové schopnosti, kooperaci mezi nimi a jejich motivaci k výuce, což jsou cenné poznatky pro vytvoření prvotního plánu k výuce a její realizaci. Pozornost věnuje diferenciaci věkových skupin žáků, od níž se odvíjí celé plánování výukového procesu. Předkládá specifika dětské literatury a možnosti, jež tento žánr přináší. Vyzdvihuje jednoduchost jazyka a charakteristiku zápletek jako nesporných elementů, které mohou podpořit zájem studentů a jejich zapojení do činností výchovně-vzdělávacího procesu. Popisuje metody čtení a jejich využití, věnuje pozornost přínosům a nedostatkům těchto metod, zaměřuje se na správné využívání metod tak, aby studenti co nejlépe porozuměli literárnímu úryvku. Nedílnou součástí celé práce s dětskou literaturou je také uvědomění si pozitivních dopadů, jež může mít četba nejen na jazykový a kulturní, ale i kognitivní rozvoj jedince. Studenti by si měli být vědomi toho, že četba nemusí být pouze školní aktivitou, ale že průběžné čtení s sebou nese nespočet výhod. Právě díky tomuto vnitřnímu uvědomění mohou být lépe motivováni k učení se mimo jiné i pomocí dětské literatury.

Kapitola číslo 3 prezentuje praktické poznatky k výuce za použití dětské literatury, počínaje tvorbou výukového plánu, který musí mít jasnou strukturu a cíl. Je zde popsáno, jakými způsoby lze s příběhy ve výuce pracovat, jak žákům dílo představit a jaké druhy cvičení lze na literaturu aplikovat. Četba samotná může u některých žáků představovat

obtíže, obzvláště pokud se jedná o četbu v cizím jazyce. Proto je nutné předvídat překážky, které přirozeně přicházejí s četbou. Ty by měly být eliminovány použitím správných výukových postupů a procvičování. Výskyt těchto překážek zajisté převažuje přínos ze samotné četby literatury.

Vybrané učebnice, jejichž tituly jsou dílčím obsahem bakalářské práce, rozebírají obsah dětských příběhů, zda a jakým způsobem jsou v učebnicích prezentovány a na jaké téma se zaměřují. Pro tyto účely byly vybrány tři učebnice, které respondenti v dotazníku uvedli jako nejvíce využívané. Každá učebnice přistupuje k příběhům jinak a také jejich množství je v jednotlivých učebnicích odlišné. V provedeném dotazníkovém šetření učitelé anglického jazyka z vybraných základních škol zmiňují svoje názory na dětskou literaturu v jejich vlastní praxi a metody, které je důležité při výuce cizích jazyků využívat.

Poslední část práce věnuje pozornost uskutečnění hodiny anglického jazyka na základě dětské knihy *The Ice Monster* od autora Davida Walliamse. Je zde stručně popsána charakteristika příběhu a důvod, proč byl tento příběh zvolen, příprava hodiny a její celková reflexe.