



Can Bears Ski?



Education Pack for EYFS and KS1

by Caroline Herlihy and Nicola Sangster

With thanks to The Betty Riseley Trust

From CAN BEARS SKI? written by Raymond Antrobus and illustrated by Polly Dunbar.
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Can Bears Ski? Education Pack

Dear Teachers,

I first heard about the book *Can Bears Ski?* on the BBC news.

I thought the story of Little Bear who was born deaf would be a perfect chance to bring awareness to our current audience, developing empathy and greater understanding of diversity in the world around them, in a delightful and fun way. When I approached the author Raymond Antobus, he was adamant that I should work with a deaf theatre company and a deaf co-director and that the play should also be seen by deaf children.

This was the start of a long journey for me. I started British Sign Language classes at Surrey University and began working with Paula Garfield, the Artistic Director of Deafinitely Theatre. This also sparked the beginning of working with the wonderful staff and children at The Lighthouse Unit at Guildford Grove School, and expanding our tour to reach schools for deaf children across the country.

Can Bears Ski? has an integrated cast of three deaf and three hearing actors and a deaf Associate Director.

The play will be in spoken English with British Sign Language; and uses a visual approach to engage all children; including, for example, those with language development needs, or for whom English is a second language.

Since we began this project Rose Ayling-Ellis, who brought greater deaf awareness to the UK through her appearance on 'Strictly Come Dancing', read *Can Bears Ski?* as the CBeebies Bedtime Story; and the government finally made British Sign Language an official language in the UK.

It feels like an exciting time to be telling this story.

We are looking forward to bringing it to you.

Best wishes

Tina Williams
Artistic Director





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A note on this pack:

Many of the ideas in this pack are suitable for EYFS and KS1. Where information/an activity is particularly aimed towards one or the other we have included this in the page heading above.

We'd love to hear your feedback on our education pack, and about the production itself: tina@piedpipertheatre.co.uk





KS1 - Using Can Bears Ski? as Part of the Reading Curriculum

Can Bears Ski? is perfect to help develop the key areas children need to know and understand in order to improve their comprehension of texts. For schools using the VIPERS reading process the following may be helpful:

Vocabulary

Discuss the adjectives used at the start of the story – shakes, rumbles, tremble – can children explain how they are similar? Could they provide alternatives? What effect does 'explode out of bed' have?

The radiator shakes, the bed rumbles, windows tremble, ceiling cracks...

Why do you think these words are in bold print?

What does Little Bear mean when he says 'I like my colours loud!'

Inference

How does Little Bear describe the snow? Why do you think he chooses these words?

Why does Little Bear think that Dad is asking him 'Can bears ski?'

On the way to school, why does Dad again ask 'Can bears ski?'

How do you think Little Bear is feeling when he sits with his friends at lunchtime?

Prediction

What do you think will happen when Little Bear goes to visit the audiologist?

How does Dad look when he is talking to the audiologist?

What do you think will happen after their conversation?





Explanation

Why is Little Bear asked to put blocks on the table?

What does the audiogram show?

Why does Little Bear 'lose' his hearing aids?

Why does Little Bear say 'Bears Can Ski!' at the end of the story?

Retrieval

How was Little Bear's deafness discovered?

What is helping Little Bear communicate with other people?

Sequence or Summarise

Little Bear puts on blue socks first, which clothes come next?

What happens when Little Bear arrives at school with Dad?





EYFS - Using *Can Bears Ski?* to develop Communication and Language

Can Bears Ski? provides a multi-sensory engagement with storytelling that can inspire follow on work that supports the EYFS curriculum.

Why not actively engage the children in telling and re-telling the story in many different ways – through artwork and creative play.

Encourage, story-telling and role play, by creating a supported role play area where children have costume/props to re-enact the story and share new ideas about what characters might do next.

Sensitive questioning can invite them to discuss the feelings of the characters using new vocabulary introduced by the production.

There is a list of suggested picture books suitable for EYFS and centred on themes of deafness and diversity at the end of this pack.

Useful Vocabulary

hearing

deaf

British Sign Language

finger spelling

lip reading

hearing aid

audiologist

headphones

audiogram

ski





Understanding Our Senses

Can children identify the five important senses?

Use pictures to help children name the senses.

Twinkl has Senses Bingo, and a hearing vocabulary poster, as well as many lesson plans and printable worksheets:

www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/topics/ourselves-all-about-me/my-senses

There is a simple lesson plan 'What Can we Hear?' more suitable for hearing KS1 students here:

www.hamilton-trust.org.uk/science/unit/848-what-can-we-hear/

The Kiboomers have a simple song about the senses suitable for EYFS and KS1 to learn here:

www.youtu.be/vXXiyIGqliE





How do we hear?

Past the basic association of body parts and senses, hearing is not covered in the National Curriculum until KS2. However, *Can Bears Ski?* will naturally raise questions about how we hear.

'How do we hear? - Inside my Ear, which follows, provides a simple explanation of how hearing works for curious KS1 pupils.

Resources:

BBC Bitesize has useful information and visuals, although aimed at KS2, which could be given context to help KS1 understand hearing:

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zgdmsbk/articles/zkdkmfr

National Geographic also have a resource that taps into the year 1 Science objective 'Pupils should be taught to: identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense', here:

www.natgeokids.com/uk/primary-resource/hearing-senses-primary-resource/

which includes a fascinating and engaging close up picture of the of microscopic hairs in our inner ear that help us hear sound.

Why are some people deaf?

To help teachers answer this complex question in an age appropriate way we suggest looking at the resources of The National Deaf Children's Association:

www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/childhood-deafness/what-is-deafness/

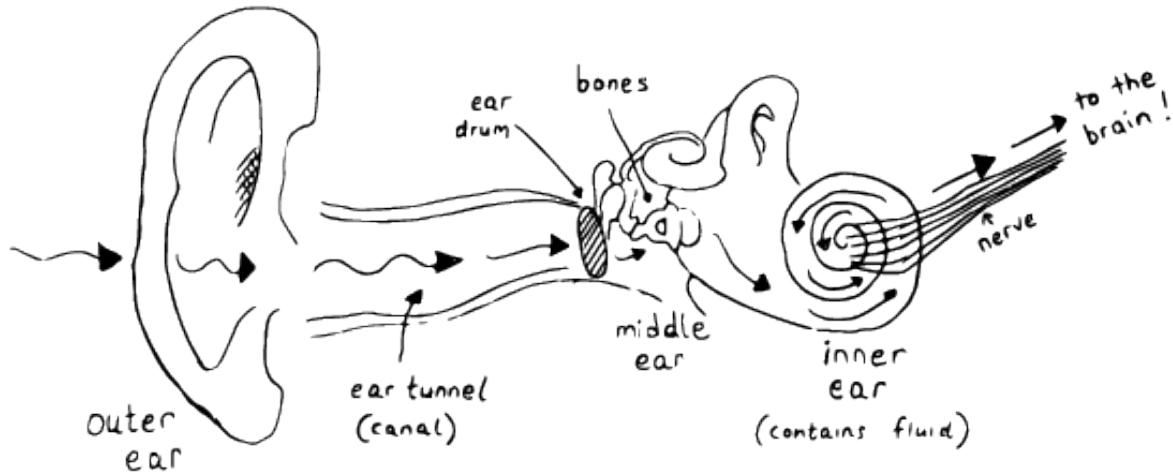
and Evelyn Glennie's Youtube video 'Feeling Sound with Evelyn Glennie' which gives a deaf perspective on feeling sound vibrations:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gl2a6w6sTAs





How do we hear? Inside my ear



Our outer ears (the parts we can see) collect the sound waves. The shape of our outer ears helps this.

The sound waves pass through a tunnel inside your ear, called the ear canal.

The sound waves hit a piece of skin stretched tightly across the tunnel and make it wobble (or vibrate). This piece of skin is called the eardrum because it's like a drum. The eardrum passes this wobble along to the bones in the middle ear.

The bones of the middle ear then pass the wobble on to the fluid in your inner ear. The fluid then wobbles your hearing nerve endings which send messages about the vibrations to your brain.

Your brain can work out what sort of sound made that wobble.

So, it is the brain that converts the vibrations into sounds that hearing people can recognise.





Talking about Deafness

It is important for deaf identity to be recognised in a positive way; the right to be bi-lingual and to choose which language to use. It is important for positive role models to be shown to all children.

BSL Facts

Sign language is a visual language that uses hand shapes, facial expression, gestures and body language. Sign languages have their own vocabulary, construction and grammar.

There are around 300 sign languages in the world. Like spoken languages, sign languages are natural, which means that they're developed over the years by the people who use them. In the UK, the term sign language usually refers to British Sign Language (BSL).

Sign languages are different to sign systems such as Sign Supported English, Signalong or Makaton, which may use BSL signs alongside spoken English but follow the structure of spoken English.

Source: National Deaf Children's Society

90% of deaf children are from hearing families and only 1 in 6 deaf children can sign. British Sign Language has its own grammar and sentence structure. For the majority of deaf people in the UK, English is a second or third language.

The curriculum needs of both deaf and hearing children are the same and many of the underpinning teaching and learning strategies are common e.g. - using a multi-sensory approach, planning cross-curricular activities to 'join up' learning, development of social and emotional learning. For Deaf children there are the additional needs of bi-lingual learning – English and British Sign Language.

Non-signing children could learn BSL signs useful in greeting and communicating with friends and classmates, such as:

hello www.british-sign.co.uk/british-sign-language/how-to-sign/hello/

thank you www.british-sign.co.uk/british-sign-language/how-to-sign/thank-you/





Seeing Sounds

To illustrate how sound is actually the movement of air, there are some very good experiments to show how this works on YouTube.

www.babbledablededo.com

Evelyn Glennie has a series of ideas for teachers on using different objects to create vibrations that can be seen and heard. The Kid's Ocean Drum Evelyn Glennie Collection can be found on her youtube channel:

www.youtube.com/@DameEvelynGlennie

Seeing Sounds – activity

Provide the children with a range of 'found' and known percussion instruments and a variety of beaters. Include drums and tambourines to show comparison with the taut skin of the eardrum.

Also include objects that can be placed on the tops of drums, such as rice, small beads etc. so that as the sounds made can be illustrated by the movement of the objects on the drums.

Provide a range of geoboards and different lengths and widths of rubber bands to be stretched between the pins. Let the children explore and ask them if they can see a change in vibrations when the rubber band is stretched





Communication Games

Simple games are a great way to encourage children to discover more about the different ways we communicate; and develop understanding of the differing communication needs of others; whilst developing expressive drama skills.

Acting Nursery Rhymes and Fairy Tales

Can the children act out the following in small groups without using sound?
Can the rest of the class guess what they are?

(Perhaps give 3 options to choose between to simplify the guessing process.)

Incy-Wincy Spider

Jack and Jill

Humpty Dumpty

Goldilocks

Three Little Pigs

Red Riding Hood

Pass it on

Sitting in a circle, the teacher gives a phrase to be whispered in the first child's ear, then passed around the circle. Has the phrase changed by the end?

This can then be extended to gestures. The children stand in a line facing forwards. Starting from the back an activity is passed along the line using just a gesture, e.g.: crying, laughing, sewing, swimming, digging, thinking, eating, drinking, sweeping, reading etc.

You can only look behind you to 'receive' the gesture from your immediate neighbour. The last person in the line has to show everyone the passed-on gesture – and say what they think it was.

Lip reading

In pairs children are given a suggestion e.g. favourite food, favourite pet, favourite TV show to communicate to their partner by lip-reading – NO SOUND OR GESTURES!





Diversity Matters

Can Bears Ski? is the perfect springboard to talking and learning about diversity for both EYFS and KS1.

For EYFS the themes of *Can Bear's Ski?* encompasses the PSED aims of understanding their own feelings and those of others, and understanding the world.

Can Bears Ski? also plays into the PHSE Primary aims of Mental Wellbeing and Respectful Relationships.

Little Bear's journey shows a growing confidence in his own abilities, as he develops a positive sense of self, and those around him gain a greater understanding and respect for the differing needs of others.

Diversity resources:

Polly Dunbar, illustrator of *Can Bears Ski?* has a beautiful comic 'Be Deaf Aware for Your Bear' available on her website:

www.pollydunbar.com/raymond-antrobust.html

which sensitively explains more about how it might feel to be deaf, and what deaf people need from their hearing friends, with beautiful illustrations – perfect for the age range.

www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/pshe-and-citizenship-ks1-diversity-matters-lesson-pack-tf-2549127

This KS1 Diversity Lesson Pack helps teach kids that Diversity Matters. Includes lesson plan, presentation, activities, matching cards & community matching.

www.tes.com/teaching-resource/i-feel-good-about-our-similarities-differences-6289401

Colourful slides to encourage children to discuss and appreciate similarities and differences in each other. Includes a game and follow-up worksheet for children to draw themselves and their friend to compare.





Emotions

Talking about emotions and respectful relationships

Referring to the illustrations and the performance:

Can the children suggest how different characters are feeling at different points in the story?

e.g.

- How does Little Bear feel at school when everyone is looking at him and he doesn't know why?
- How does Dad Bear feel when he thinks Little Bear isn't listening to him?
- How does Little Bear feel when he first visits the audiologist?

What are the visual clues? i.e. How do we show our emotions?

How did the actors show us the different emotions of the characters?

What vocabulary can we use to express how the characters are feeling?

Who am I?

This circle time game can be used to help children to explore their identity and their emotions, and encourage respectful relationships in how they talk to and about others.

Sit in a circle and all hold hands.

The teacher starts by squeezing the hand of the child to their left or right.

The squeeze is then passed around the circle by each child until it returns to the teacher.

Repeat this by sending a wink around the circle, then send a smile around the circle.

At the end of the smile round, ask the children how receiving a smile made them feel.

Then start off the circle again by saying "I like _____ (name of whoever is next to the teacher) because _____"; and pass this around the circle.

Then repeat with _____ (start with name of child) is good at _____.

Then start with "I feel happy when _____" and pass it around.

Then start with "my super power is _____" (encourage children to think of something that is extra special to them.....e.g. I can hold my breath for...seconds, I can make my dog give me his paw, I can make my friend laugh etc...)

Ask the children to look at and describe the faces of their friends as they complete their sentences.





Emotional 'Charades'

The communication games above can be extended to help us learn about emotions and how we show them in our faces.

Try 'passing on' an emotion to the group using just facial expression. Can the rest of the group guess what the emotion is?

e.g. angry, worried, tired, confused, surprised, afraid, disgusted, excited, thoughtful.

Encourage children to look and describe how they came up with their answers – how have the features on the face changed each time?

Emotional Portraits

As a further visual activity, see **John Brewster**, American deaf portrait painter in **Deaf Role Models** (below). Why not also look at the work of well-known portrait artists here:

www.artincontext.org/famous-portrait-paintings/

How are the subjects' faces showing us how they feel?

Can the children paint self-portraits expressing a time when they experienced strong emotions?

KS1 children could extend this work into looking at Expressionism, and how artists have expressed emotion through their work more generally.





Deaf Role Models

There are countless deaf people who have made a significant contribution to society. It is vital to celebrate deaf role models and to ensure that they are visible in our teaching.

Here is a small selection of deaf artists and musicians whose work you could learn more about:

Deaf Artists

Cristoforo de Predis 1440-1486 was deaf from birth. He became a renowned miniaturist painter.

For his paintings go to: www.meisterdrucke.es

'Death of the Sun, Moon and Stars' is a great leaping off points for discussion. Ask children what can they see? What colours are used? How does it make them feel? Can they create their own atmospheric sky pictures?

John Brewster Jr. 1766-1854 was an American deaf portrait painter. Go to www.folkartmuseum.org/exhibitions/a-deaf-artist-in-early-america-the-worlds-of-john-brewster-jr/ to see some of the people he painted.

Who do the children they think the people in the paintings were? Are their expressions, the objects they are holding, or the way they are sitting giving us any clues to who they were, how they felt, or what they did? This could launch a self-portrait project.

Some living deaf artists whose work could be a springboard for your own creative work:

Hamish Rose, landscape artist www.hamish-art.com

Omeima Mudawie-Rowlings, MBE, multimedia artist. www.omeima-arts.com

Vicky Barber-Crimes, abstract colourful and patterned acrylic work on canvas, www.yellowedgegallery.com/vicky-barber/

Lily Bertrand Web, photographer www.lilybertrandwebb.com/editorial/
www.hearinglikeme.com/a-look-at-some-deaf-artists-around-the-world/ has links to deaf artists around the world.





Deaf Musicians

Dame Evelyn Glennie, whose videos explaining sound we have already linked to is a well-known living musician. Her story is beautifully told for 4-8 year olds in 'Listen: How Evelyn Glennie, a Deaf Girl, Changed Percussion' by Shannon Stocker, illustrated by Devon Holzwarth:

www.evelyn.co.uk/shop/books/listen-how-evelyn-glennie-a-deaf-girl-changed-percussion/

Ludwig van Beethoven is an historical figure known as a brilliant musician/composer, who composed some of his best and most famous work after becoming deaf, including his 9th Symphony with its brilliant 'Ode to Joy':

www.youtube.com/watch?v=uooe16lLaPo

SignKid is a deaf hip-hop artist – this BBC interview tells more about his work, plays a little of his music, and is age appropriate in content:

www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-london-46071832

(However, his videos themselves are not suitable for the age range.)

Deaf Actors

There are many deaf actors working today. The children may have seen Rose Ayling-Elis on 'Strictly Come Dancing' or Vilma Jackson in Coronation Street.

Three of the actors of *Can Bears Ski?* are deaf, and you can learn more about them from their biographies on our website.





Can Bears Ski? - Making the play

Who's involved?

Can Bears Ski? is a collaborative project between **The Pied Piper Theatre Company** and **Deafinitely Theatre**. The production is for deaf and hearing audiences. It is an opportunity to celebrate diversity and develop a positive understanding of deafness. *Can Bears Ski?* provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the richness of deaf culture with the hearing community and this Education Pack aims to develop this for young children.

Deafinitely Theatre

www.deafinitelytheatre.co.uk

Now in its 20th year, Deafinitely Theatre is led by Artistic Director Paula Garfield. Deafinitely Theatre is the first deaf launched and deaf led professional theatre company in the UK, producing quality bilingual theatre in British Sign Language and spoken English. Its Youth Theatre, formed in 2010, is an integral part of the organisation and provides an opportunity for those aged 14-25 years, whatever their communication methods, to have access to drama training.

Rose Ayling-Ellis is patron of Deafinitely Youth Theatre, where she started her acting journey in 2012, before moving up to Deafinitely Theatre's HUB development programme to further develop her training. A YouTube video of Rose Ayling-Ellis signing *Can Bear's Ski?* can be found at:

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/cbeebies-bedtime-stories-rose-ayling-ellis-can-bears-ski





Pied Piper Theatre

Founded in 1984 by Artistic Director, Tina Williams, The Pied Piper Theatre Company has been creating magical new plays for children for forty years, reaching well over half a million children in the UK, and beyond.

Pied Piper specialises in new writing and adaptations for young children; and exciting first theatre experiences for babies and toddlers.

We are committed to making our audience's crucial first experience of theatre as creative, original, exciting and high quality as it can be; regardless of how or where they are able to experience it.

For this reason we tour into small rural and big inner-city schools, tiny arts venues and large scale theatres – bringing the same high quality, imaginative, full scale production with us wherever we go.

Pied Piper Theatre Company's patron is Dame Julie Walters.

You can find out more about the company, and the production at www.piedpipertheatre.co.uk





Can Bears Ski?

The picture book *Can Bears Ski?* is widely available in bookshops. It is published in the UK by Walker Books (2021) and was selected as an Ezra Jack Keats honouree winner in 2021. In 2022 it was selected for a Read For Empathy (primary) Collection Award.

www.booktrust.org.uk/book/c/can-bears-ski/

Raymond Antrobus – author of the picture book *Can Bears Ski?*

Raymond Antrobus MBE FRSL is an award-winning poet and writer. His poems have been published in POETRY, Poetry Review, Lit Hub, The New Statesman and The Deaf Poets Society, among others. Raymond's poetry has appeared on BBC 2, BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4, Channel 4; and in The Big Issue, The Jamaica Gleaner and The Guardian.

In 2019 he became the first ever poet to be awarded the Rathbone Folio Prize for best work of literature in any genre.

Other accolades include the Ted Hughes Award, Lucille Clifton Legacy Award, PBS Winter Choice, A Sunday Times Young Writer of the year Award, Somerset Maugham Award and The Guardian Poetry Book Of The Year 2018.

In 2019 and 2021 his poems (Jamaican British, The Perseverance and Happy Birthday Moon) were added to the UK's GCSE syllabus.

Raymond is an Ambassador for The Poetry School, Arts Emergency and a board member for English PEN (an organisation that promotes freedom of expression and literature across frontiers). He is also an advocate for several D/deaf charities including Deaf Kidz International and National Deaf Children's Society.

www.raymondantrobus.com

Polly Dunbar – illustrator of the picture book *Can Bears Ski?*

Polly Dunbar is one of the best-known author/illustrators working in the UK today, she has created many much loved books for children.

Polly's bestselling book, Penguin, has won numerous awards including the Book Trust Early Year's Award 2007, the Nestle Silver Children's Book Prize 2007, the Practical Pre-School Award 2007, the Red House Children's Book of the Year Award 2008 and was shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal.

Polly has worked with many authors including, David Almond, Raymond Antrobus, Michael Morpurgo, Michael Rosen, Eoin McLaughlin and her mother Joyce Dunbar. In 2006 Polly and Katherine Morton co-founded Long Nose Puppets, the Brighton based children's theatre company. Their adaptations include Shoe Baby, Arthur's Dream Boat, Penguin and most recently The Hug.

www.pollydunbar.com





Useful links:

Raymond Antrobus reading *Can Bears Ski?*

www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=raymond+Antrobus+reading+%27Can+Bears+Ski%3F&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8-fpstate=ive&vld=cid:e825df9b,vid:uVVVMxC5iLc

Rose Ayling-Ellis reading *Can Bears Ski?* for CBeebies

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/cbeebies-bedtime-stories-rose-ayling-ellis-can-bears-ski

Polly Dunbar's beautiful comic 'Be Deaf Aware for Your Bear'

www.pollydunbar.com/raymond-antrobus.html

British Deaf Association

www.bda.org.uk/history/what-we-stand-for/

Royal Association for Deaf People

www.royaldeaf.org.uk/

British Sign Language

www.britishsignlanguage.com/british-sign-language-3/

Hearing Link on lipreading

www.hearinglink.org/living/lipreading-communicating/what-is-lipreading/

Books about deafness and diversity:

Proud to be Deaf

www.hachette.co.uk/titles/lilli-beese/proud-to-be-deaf/9781526302199/

I am Deaf and That's Okay

www.rekakadar.com/imdeafandthatsokay

www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/d/deaf-awareness-week/

www.deafunity.org/article_interview/7-childrens-books-about-deafness/

Perfectly Norman: - introduces EYFS to ideas of diversity

www.shop.scholastic.co.uk/products/128909?gclid=CjwKCAjwhJukBhBPEiwAnilcNZoMvDCr6xuf0N27DyQW2MYH2auiyaGqxeJGTWF8eYDKu-wwtKGBGhoCAj0QAvD_BwE

