

Tiddler

The story-telling fish

This charming poster features *Tiddler*, the little fish 'with a big imagination', involved in some of his most daring escapades

Activities across the curriculum

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Look at the the poster images and discuss what Tiddler is doing. Talk about the shark's mean face and the fierce turtle biting the squid. Do the children think that Tiddler was frightened by these creatures? Emphasise that it is safe and fun to make up stories about scary things.
- Provide your own Tiddler in the form of a goldfish in a tank. Mimic the poster by adding shells and a mock treasure chest to encourage imaginative observation. Emphasise to the children the need to care for your fish.

Communication and Language

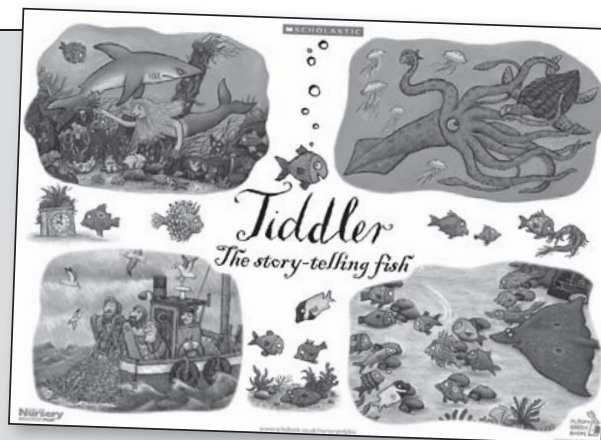
- Explain that Tiddler is a little fish 'with a big imagination'. Talk about what this means, referring to the illustrations on the poster as you discuss the stories he makes up when he arrives late for school. Encourage the children to have big imaginations like Tiddler, and make up tall stories about events on their way to the setting.
- Read the title of the poster and explore the shape of the letters. Explain that illustrators choose different forms of lettering to suit illustrations. Invite the children to pretend to be artists by drawing pictures, then type out their names on a computer and print them in different fonts to attach to their pictures. Discuss which lettering they think most suits their pictures.

Mathematics

- Use the poster to encourage counting skills, for example, 'How many times does Tiddler appear on the poster?', and 'How many tentacles does the squid have?'.
- Introduce appropriate mathematical language to describe the sea creatures, for example, 'Squids have long, curly tentacles and a pointed tail'. Look at the patterns on fish such as spots, stripes and rows of scales.

Understanding the World

- Make your own books about the sea creatures that are featured on the poster, using images downloaded from the internet, and information from non-fiction books and posters.
- Mount the poster on to card and cover it with sticky-backed plastic. Encourage the children to construct Tiddler's undersea world in an open box lying on its side, and use the poster for reference. Cover the bottom of the box with sand and shells, and hang wool and ribbon seaweed and card sea creatures from the inside of the lid. Add a treasure chest overflowing with beads and jewels. Use the finished model for imaginative play and story-telling by introducing small-world creatures.



How to use the poster

Hang the poster in a prominent position in a designated 'Under the sea' interactive area, bringing together some of the activity ideas below, such as the children's artwork, live fish in a tank and a water tray with an 'under the sea' theme. Add atmosphere with crêpe paper and Cellophane 'seaweed' strips hanging from the ceiling. Include a comfortable 'cave' area with a pop-up tent and cushions draped in sand-coloured fabric for sharing the story of *Tiddler* and other books with an 'under the sea' theme.

Physical Development

- Encourage the children to re-enact Tiddler's events using expressive movement, for example, wriggling out of the squid's tentacles or flapping around in the fishermen's net.
- Transform equipment and apparatus such as planks, benches, tunnels and 'A' frames into a life-size version of Tiddler's world, using the poster for inspiration. Encourage the children to pretend to be sea creatures negotiating the obstacles.

Expressive Arts and Design

- Visit the Gruffalo website www.Gruffalo.com to find out more about Axel Scheffler, who is the illustrator of the poster. Look for similarities to the poster in some of his illustrations from other books, such as character's large eyes and the shape of their faces. Transform the home area into an illustrator's office, complete with desk, mark-making equipment and a comfy chair. Let the children have fun pretending to be an illustrator, inventing characters and bringing them to life.
- Transform a water tray into Tiddler's world. Introduce shells, model creatures, a shipwreck, plastic seaweed strips and blue water for the children to re-enact Tiddler's adventures.

Jean Evans is an early years consultant and author.