



INTRODUCTION TO  
THE RESOURCE –  
FOR TEACHERS

The  
**Magic Tree House**<sup>TM</sup>  
series

The books in the *Magic Tree House* series all follow the same formula – Annie and Jack embark on an adventure which encompasses fantasy, inventiveness, action and villainy and then, of course, they escape so that they can return home safely. Links between the books can be drawn as cross referencing of character, structure and style underpin the narratives. All of these could lead onto wider exploration of genres, their key features and how they create a whole. For example, the theme of the Egyptians could be explored through a variety of texts (fiction and non fiction), with *Secret of the Pyramid* as the catalyst.

These resources, pitched at KS1, cover all the current stories: *Valley of the Dinosaurs*, *Castle of Mystery*, *Secret of the Pyramid*, *Pirates' Treasure!* However, it might be easier to manage this if the pupils all read the same story. These generic activities can be used either with a variety of Magic Tree House™ adventures, or with just one. Discussion is encouraged through role play and drama so that pupils are talking about books rather than writing about them, although pupils will be given the opportunity to write in a variety of forms. Prior to reading, shared focuses on all the stories include genre, prediction and inference skills based around the topics explored in the stories. During reading, activities focus on characterisation, setting and style. Post reading activities include structure and story telling.

# Magic Tree House™

## Ways in ...

### Activity 1

#### Reading strategies: prediction, speculation, enquiry, inference and deduction

1. Pupils work in groups of four. Give each group one of the opening pages to read from one of the stories. Do not contextualise these for them. For an extension activity, the more able pupils could be given more than one of the opening extracts.

2. Firstly, ask pupils to discuss any words which they don't understand. What strategies can they use to help them work out the meanings e.g. phonic knowledge, then reading on to the end or rereading to work out what they think it means.

3. What do they think their book will be about? Encourage pupils to explore the genre and draw links to any other action/adventure/fantasy and non fiction books they may have read. What do they think the purpose of this book will be? Develop the pupils' inferential abilities by asking them to support their ideas with evidence.

4. See if they can pick up clues as to what the topic will be about e.g. dinosaurs, pirates.

They can also refer to the title and cover pages to help them. What do they already know about their topic? As a group, pupils complete the first two columns of the grid:

What do I know about ... ?	What do I want to know about ... ?	What have I learnt about ... ?	How did I learn it?

## Activity 2 (this builds on activity 1)

### Reading strategies: skimming, scanning

1. Hunted information is much more memorable than information handed on a plate. Pupils work in pairs. Provide each pair with a 'hunter's map'. This map gives locations in the classroom and beyond, where certain types of information can be found about each of the topics featured in the stories. You might just focus on one topic, or you might have all four featured and give each pair a specific focus.
2. Try to keep the information as varied as possible, so artefacts, photographs, CDRoms, people dressed up and in role, who answer questions, posters, books. Pupils should aim to find the answers to their 'what do I want to know about' questions.
3. How much more do they know about the topics now? A volunteer shares with the class what they know about their topic. They could wear 'a mantle' which reflects their topic to add to their magical powers. e.g. a pirate's hat, a knight's helmet.
4. Pupils to add ideas to columns 3 and 4 of the grid. This grid can also be revisited at the end of reading the book.

## Activity 3

### Reading strategies: skimming, scanning, inference, deduction, speculation, prediction

1. In pairs, pupils should read the list of chapter headings. Can they predict what will happen in the story? Where do they think the most exciting part of the story will be? What suggests this? Ask them to note this point down, so that when they do read on they can see if their prediction comes true.
2. Can we do the same with chapter headings in non fiction books? Would we want to? Why and how are chapter headings in non fiction books different to fiction books?

Learning objectives (outlined below) taught in these resources have been taken from years 1 and 2 of the revised Primary Framework for Literacy:

Strand	Objective
<b>Speaking</b>	Year 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpret a text by reading aloud, with some variety in pace and emphasis</li> </ul> Year 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speak with clarity and use appropriate intonation when reading and reciting texts</li> <li>Tell real and imagined stories using the conventions of familiar story language</li> </ul>
<b>Listening and responding</b>	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen to and follow instructions accurately, asking for help and clarification if necessary</li> </ul> Year 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen to others in class, ask relevant questions and follow instructions</li> <li>Listen to a talk by an adult, remember some specific points and identify what they have learned</li> </ul>
<b>Group discussion and interaction</b>	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain their views to others in a small group, decide how to report the group's views to the class</li> </ul>
<b>Drama</b>	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act out their own and well-known stories, using voices for characters</li> </ul> Year 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present part of traditional stories, their own stories or work drawn from different parts of the curriculum for members of their own class</li> </ul>
<b>Understanding interpreting and texts</b>	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the main events and characters in stories, and find specific information in simple texts</li> <li>Use syntax and context when reading for meaning</li> <li>Make predictions showing an understanding of ideas, events and characters</li> <li>Recognise the main elements that shape different texts</li> </ul> Year 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draw together ideas and information from across a whole text, using simple signposts in the text</li> <li>Use syntax and context to build their store of vocabulary when reading for meaning</li> </ul>
<b>Engaging with and responding to texts</b>	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visualise and comment on events, characters and ideas, making imaginative links to their own experiences</li> <li>Distinguish fiction and non-fiction texts and the different purposes for reading them</li> </ul> Year 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with books through exploring and enacting interpretations</li> <li>Explain their reactions to texts, commenting on important aspects</li> </ul>
<b>Creating and shaping texts</b>	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convey information and ideas in simple non-narrative forms</li> </ul>
<b>Text structure and organisation</b>	Year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write chronological and non-chronological texts using simple structures</li> </ul> Year 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use planning to establish clear sections for writing</li> </ul>