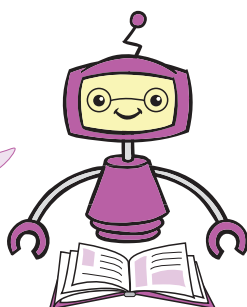


The dragon's tale

I love the old stories of dragons, unicorns and knights. Don't you? In this work sheet we're going to learn about dragons, and practise our reading comprehension skills. Let's set out on our heroic journey ...



LINKS TO:

Stage 3, Module 5
Learning Object 2: *Kate's adventures*

PRIOR LEARNING:

Stage 2

Module 3 Work Sheet 4: *Inspector Zak is on the case*

Module 5 Work Sheet 3: *Telling stories*

Module 5 Work Sheet 5: *Reading between the lines*

1 There are dragons in Indonesia!

The Indonesian dragon, or *naga*, is a mythical creature found in almost all the islands of Indonesia, especially those heavily influenced by the Hindu culture. In Sanskrit, the word *naga* means 'snake'. Indeed, *naga* is often depicted as a great snake similar to the king cobra. In Indonesia *nagas* are portrayed both as forces of good and evil: they are considered divine in nature and benevolent, but also seen as persecutors of all creatures.

In Java and Bali the use of *naga* in royal emblems is extensive. *Nagas* are used to decorate the *keris* (Indonesian dagger), as well as the head-dresses, crowns and other objects owned by the royal family. *Nagas* also appear in folklore: *Hyang Antabhoga* or the *naga* god of the underground kingdom is the most beloved *naga* in Javanese culture.

In Kalimantan, especially amongst the Dayak and the Banjar people, *nagas* are associated with the underworld and are depicted living under water or underground. People in Kalimantan still believe that there are three very big *naga* living beneath their home, following the contour of the city of Balikpapan. According to legend, these *nagas* are meditating; some people believe that the end of their meditation will be marked by heavy and prolonged rain. In 1978 and 1985, Balikpapan experienced very heavy rains that caused landslides and floods, and claimed lives and property. According to local stories, after the

flood receded, people could see markings on the ground similar to the movements of a great snake. They believed that on those two occasions, two out of the three *naga* came out of their meditation. *Naga* and the hornbills or *burung enggang* appear in carvings decorating some of the architecture in Banjar, especially in Banjar houses.

Apart from dragons found in Indonesian mythology or folklore, there are real dragons, alive and well and becoming a popular tourist attraction: Komodo dragons. Komodo dragons are the largest living species of lizard ever found in Indonesia, on the island of Komodo. The Komodo dragon is one of the national animals of Indonesia.

2 The English dragon

Australians may be more familiar with the dragons that come to us from Western European traditions, particularly from English myths and legends. In English literature, dragons have traditionally been symbols of evil and terror. A typical English dragon can fly and breathe fire. In many early stories and images, dragons have long, worm-like bodies; later they look more like winged dinosaurs. Many legends describe dragons as greedy creatures, guarding hordes of gold in mountain caves. They often desire beautiful young women, and demand them as sacrifices.

In English legends, dragons often represent the dark side of humanity, particularly qualities such as greed, lust and violence. The conquest of a dragon can often be seen as a symbol for overcoming these evils.

Some of the most popular and widely known stories in English are the tales of King Arthur of Camelot and his knights. Arthur's father, Uther Pendragon, received

the name Pendragon from his older brother, who saw a dragon-shaped comet. Pendragon also means 'chief dragon' which refers to Uther's status as chief of the warriors.

Dragoons, which are a division of soldiers that originated in the 16th century, received their name from their primary weapon, called a dragon. This dragon was a short Wheellock gun with a muzzle decorated with the head of a dragon. To fire the gun, the soldier released a flint to strike and ignite a pan of gunpowder on the top of the gun, creating a flame. The mounted infantryman with his loose coat and outstretched arm (with flame) galloping into battle was said to resemble a mythical dragon.

Saint George and the dragon

Below is one of the most famous English dragon stories: the tale of Saint George and the dragon.

The town of Silene had a pond, as large as a lake, that was home to a plague-bearing dragon that poisoned the countryside. To appease the dragon, the people of Silene fed it their children, chosen by lottery. It happened that the lot fell on the king's daughter, who, in some versions of the story, is called Una. The king, distraught with grief, told the people they could have all his gold and silver and half of his kingdom if his daughter was spared; the people refused. The daughter was sent out to the lake, decked out as a bride, to be fed to the dragon.

By chance, Saint George rode past the lake. The princess, trembling, sought to send him away, but George vowed to remain. The dragon reared out of the lake while they were conversing. Saint George fortified himself with the Sign of the

Cross, charged the dragon on horseback and wounded it with his lance. Then he called to the princess to throw him her girdle, which he put around the dragon's neck. The dragon followed the girl like a meek beast on a leash.

Saint George and the princess led the dragon back to the city. Saint George called out to the people, saying that if they consented to become Christians and be baptised, he would slay the dragon. The king and the people of Silene converted to Christianity, George slew the dragon, and the dragon's body was carried out of the city on four ox-carts. In the place where the dragon died, the king built a church to the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint George, and from its altar a spring arose whose waters cured all disease.

3 Dragons in the modern world

In the 20th and 21st centuries, many stories and films feature dragons.

You may be familiar with the dragons that feature in the stories written by J.R.R. Tolkien, especially the dragons in *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In the Middle Earth books, there are four named dragons: Smaug, Glaurung, Ancalagon and Scatha. The books also include other unnamed families of dragons, which breed in the north.

In Tolkien's Middle Earth there are four types of dragons. The types are defined by how many legs they walk on and whether they fly, as well as whether they are fire-breathing. All of the dragons love treasure (especially gold), and are cunning and physically strong. They also possess a hypnotic power called 'dragon-spell'. Dragons mature very slowly and live long lives. They are not purely destructive by nature, but fight for the right to be left alone with their treasures.

In the images Tolkien drew of dragons, they are most often long, serpentine creatures with scales and wings; they breathe fire and fly.

Most of the dragons in contemporary fantasy literature draw on Tolkien's imagery and research. They are most often fire-breathing, scaly and dangerous. They usually live alone in a cave, where they guard their treasure jealously. Dragons are frequently portrayed as intelligent, but evil, and often demand sacrifices from the villagers or townspeople near their homes. There are exceptions to this. In the famous *Inheritance Cycle* books, dragons are bonded with their human riders, and even though they are still dangerous, large and violent, the main dragon, Saphira, is loyal to her human friend, Eragon, and is intelligent, brave and funny.

Some of the other famous works that feature dragons include J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books, and Anne McCaffrey's *Dragonriders of Pern*. The role-playing game *Dungeons & Dragons* heavily features dragons: both friendly and malevolent types.

There are also many famous dragons that are friendly and gentle, such as those featured in the song 'Puff the Magic Dragon', and the film, *Pete's Dragon*.

Exercises

Exercise 1

Anna's Australian friend, Kate, is enjoying her first trip to Indonesia. She is keen to find out as much as she can about Indonesian culture and asks Nina's aunt some questions. Kate is particularly interested in learning about dragons. Aunty remembers a story her own mother told her and decides to share this with the girls.

Read the story below and then complete the exercises that follow.

Pada zaman dahulu kala di Jawa Tengah hidup seekor naga yang perkasa bernama Baruklinting. Naga itu bersemedi dengan mulut terbuka tetapi semedinya itu selesai ketika sembilan anak gembala masuk mulutnya.

Pada suatu hari, langit mendung disertai petir dan halilintar yang menggelegar di seluruh permukaan bumi. Hujan deras kemudian turun membasahi bumi. Sepuluh orang anak gembala berlarian mencari tempat berteduh sampai Samin, salah seorang dari anak-anak itu, menemukan sebuah gua. Di dalam gua ada banyak stalaktit dan stalakmit yang tajam. Tanpa peduli, sembilan anak gembala itu masuk sambil mendorong Samin keluar dari gua. Tiba-tiba, mulut gua itu tertutup dan hujan berhenti. Samin berdiri di luar gua tanpa mengerti apa yang baru saja terjadi. Kemudian dia berlari kembali ke desa dan menceritakan pengalamannya itu kepada semua orang di desa.

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Namun demikian, ketika orang-orang desa sampai di tempat anak-anak gembala itu menghilang, guanya tidak bisa ditemukan lagi. Orang-orang desa percaya bahwa Samin telah bertemu dengan naga Baruklinting, yang akhirnya selesai bersemedi. Karena kejadian itu, desa ini kemudian dikenal dengan nama 'Kesongo', yang berarti 'sembilan', untuk menggambarkan kesembilan anak gembala yang dilahap oleh naga itu.

Answer the following questions in Indonesian.

1.1 Siapa nama naga dalam cerita ini?

1.2 Di mana cerita ini terjadi?

1.3 Apa yang sedang dilakukan oleh naga itu?

1.4 Apa yang dilakukan anak-anak gembala? Mengapa?

1.5 Siapa Samin?

1.6 Apa yang terjadi dengan Samin?

1.7 Apa yang kemudian dilakukan Samin?

1.8 Apa nama baru yang diberikan kepada desa itu? Mengapa?

Exercise 2

Read the story again and answer the following questions in English.

2.1 How are dragons portrayed in this Indonesian story?
