

## The Playdate Adventures Teaching Resource Pack

### This pack includes:

- A brief synopsis of each book (main themes explored)
- Generic resources for use with any of the 4 books (Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening)
- Guidance of how to use The Playdate Adventures to write about a geographical/context in a non-fiction text

### The Playdate Adventures synopses and main themes:

Title of book	Brief synopsis	Main themes explored
<b><i>The Wishing Star</i></b>	It's the start of the new term and Katy is excited about her two best friends (Cassie and Zia) coming over for a playdate. The three friends (and Katy's cat Thunder) find themselves transported into outer space on a mission to reach the Wishing Star!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Friendship</li><li>▪ Facing fears</li><li>▪ Thinking outside the box</li><li>▪ Making difficult decisions</li><li>▪ Strong girls</li><li>▪ Recycling</li><li>▪ Conservation</li><li>▪ Endangered animals</li><li>▪ Diversity</li><li>▪ Magic</li></ul>
<b><i>The North Pole Picnic</i></b>	Winter has arrived and the girls are set for another playdate at Zia's house. This adventure takes them to the North Pole where they do not receive a warm welcome from the animals. How will the girls win the trust of the Arctic Queen and the animals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Celebrating differences</li><li>▪ Diversity</li><li>▪ Climate change including fossil fuels and the Great Melt</li><li>▪ North Pole animals and their characteristics</li><li>▪ Democracy</li><li>▪ Resilience</li><li>▪ All have different talents</li></ul>
<b><i>The Magic Ocean Slide</i></b>	On the hottest day of the year, Cassie has an idea for an adventure involving a HUGE water slide. While exploring the ocean, the girls (and Thunder) meet a distressed dolphin who reveals a big problem. Can the playdate adventurers solve it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Confidence building</li><li>▪ Life under the ocean (habitat)</li><li>▪ Plastic pollution</li><li>▪ Creativity</li><li>▪ Finding solutions</li></ul>

<b>The Giant Conker</b>	The Playdate Adventure Club head to a magical forest in search of a giant conker. But all is not what it seems. After meeting a talking squirrel called Hazel, another mission is set. Will they complete this quest and earn another charm?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Making decisions</li> <li>▪ Confidence and determination</li> <li>▪ Resilience</li> <li>▪ Problem-solving</li> <li>▪ Self-importance and greed</li> <li>▪ Teamwork</li> <li>▪ Rainforests</li> <li>▪ Deforestation</li> </ul>
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**Generic resources for all 4 books in the series:**

**Reading**

- 1) Activities that promote children demonstrating that they have understood what they have read through the development of summarising skills:

Activity title	Description
<b>Hashtags</b>	<p>Explain to the children that whilst we are reading the text, we will pause at certain points and write a brief summary of what we have read (like a hashtag). There are 2 main rules: hashtags should be 6 words or less (to avoid copying the text) and we need to be creative (alliteration/play with language/use commands, questions, statements &amp; questions/try to use proverbs or song lyrics).</p> <p>Initially teachers can scribe the hashtags together with the pupils – modelling the activity and scaffolding their contributions. This can evolve into children writing hashtags in pairs and then independently.</p> <p>Begin by reading the text and then pause – how can we summarise what we have just read? Let’s write a hashtag. Use your discretion to pause at appropriate points in the text where the children can summarise.</p> <p>Here is an example for the first three pages of <i>The Wishing Star</i></p> <p>#Ordinary Tuesday?  #What does nervous-cited mean?  #First ever playdate  #Dad always says the right thing</p>

	<p>#Watch out for Thunder  #Always in the way  #One-eyed rescue cat  #Cats can be best friends too!</p>
<b>Choosing the most important events</b>	<p>Display this: <i>'What are the 3/5 most important events from this extract/chapter?'</i> (Change the number of events depending on the length of text read or the age of the pupils.)</p> <p>Explain that after we have read the text, pupils will work in pairs or groups to answer the question.</p> <p>Encourage children to choose events and then rank them from 1–3 or 1–5.</p> <p>Feedback chosen events and discuss any strong similar choices and any unusual choices. Praise all – what is important to one child is not always important to another!</p>
<b>Emojis and inference</b>	<p>Display some different emojis (wide range of emotions) on A4 or A3 paper.</p> <p><i>'Do any of the characters feel like what these emojis represent?'</i></p> <p>Discuss what feeling(s) each emoji represents.</p> <p>Explain that whilst we are reading the text, we will pause to look at the emojis.</p> <p>Encourage the pupils to choose an emoji and say: _____ felt like this when _____ (name the character and identify the point in the book where they felt like that).</p>
<b>Sequencing</b>	<p>Younger readers can sequence the events from the story.</p>

2) What do we think of the characters and how do we know?

Display a table like this:

What do we know about _____? (make a point)	How do we know? (give the evidence)

Explain to the pupils that we are going to share our impressions of the characters. However, each time we make a point about a character, we need to provide some evidence from the text to support our opinion.

For example:

In *The North Pole Picnic*, using pages 2 and 4 we could write about Zia’s mum.

What do we know about Zia’s mum? (make a point)	How do we know? (give the evidence)
She is frustrated and a bit angry.	She yells, “Come on, Zia! It’s time to leave.” (pg 2)
She cares about her children/wants her children to be on time for school.	She does not want them to be late. “Everyone ready?” their mum asked, hurrying them out of the door so as not to be late for the bell. (pg 4)

Teachers can change which character the pupils are focusing on or give them a couple of grids with 2 characters. Use Thunder too as he is very exciting to write about – as well as the many other talking animals!

3) Looking at the writer’s language and analysing what it means.

- Choose some examples from the books to analyse and discuss what the author is telling us; what impact it has on us as the reader. Recognise how we can use it in our writing.

In each book, Emma Beswetherick repeats the same dialogue but uses different words for ‘said’. This could be a discussion point with the pupils – why does the writer do this?

<i>The Wishing Star</i>	<i>The North Pole Picnic</i>	<i>The Magic Ocean Slide</i>	<i>The Giant Conker</i>
“Oh...!” <b>gasp</b> ed Cassandra.	“OH!” <b>exclaim</b> ed Katy.	“OH...!” <b>crie</b> d Cassandra.	“OH!” <b>exclaim</b> ed Zia.
“My...!” <b>crie</b> d Zia.	“MY!” <b>gasp</b> ed Cassandra.	“MY...!” <b>squeal</b> ed Zia.	“MY!” <b>gasp</b> ed Katy.
“Goodness!” <b>shout</b> ed Katy.	“GOODNESS!” <b>crie</b> d Zia.	“GOODNESS!” <b>shrie</b> ked Katy.	“GOODNESS!” <b>crie</b> d Cassandra <b>in amazement</b> .
Chapter 4	Chapter 3	Chapter 3	Chapter 3

Discuss what impact each word in bold has on the reader.

Rank the words on a line of emotion:

Least emotion

Most emotion

- Look at examples of how the writer shows us how the main characters feel. Here are some from *The Giant Conker*.

Example from the book	What does it mean? What impact does it have on you the reader?
<i>Cassandra beamed.</i>	
<i>She was the shyest of the three girls and had felt butterflies in her tummy for days worrying that her playdate wouldn't be as good as the ones at her friends' houses.</i>	
<i>Knowing Katy and Zia loved her den as much as she did finally made the butterflies' wings stop beating.</i>	
<i>Cassandra's stomach did a nervous flip, but she didn't want to make a fuss.</i>	

Younger readers can look closely at some of the language taken from the book – what does this tell us?

4) Comparing the books – what do they have in common?

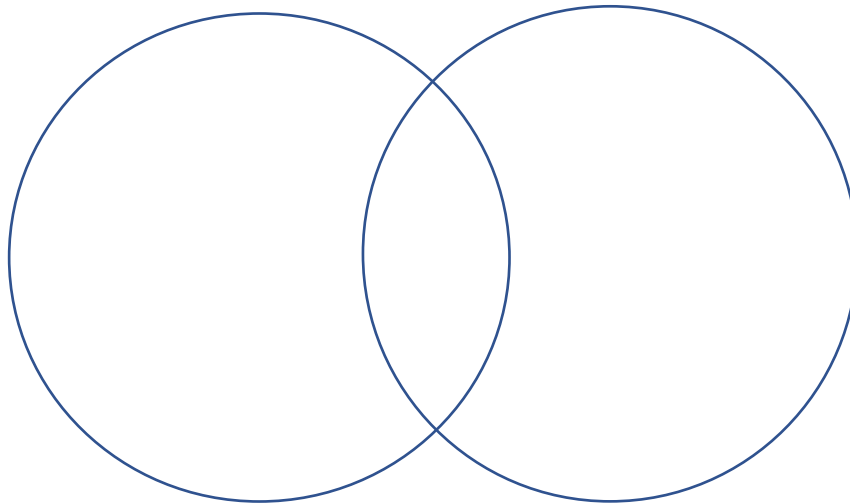
- In each adventure, the three girls and Thunder are rewarded with a charm, which is a reminder of their amazing mission. Discuss the reasons for the choice of charm for each book. You could also look at the design around the page number and have a discussion!

	<i>The Wishing Star</i>	<i>The North Pole Picnic</i>	<i>The Magic Ocean Slide</i>	<i>The Giant Conker</i>
<i>Page number design</i>	<i>Star</i>			
<i>Charm collected</i>	<i>Star</i>			

- Depending on how many books the children have read, challenge them to choose 2 to compare and contrast.

*The  
Wishing  
Star*

*The North  
Pole  
Picnic*



Pupils need to think about traits/themes/events that the 2 books have in common and write these in the middle circle. Any that are unique to the book can be written in the other circles.

- 5) Why is the character of Thunder in the books? Pose this question to the pupils and ask them to discuss it in groups. Support younger readers.
  - Why does the writer include a cat as a main character?
  - How does Thunder move the plot on?
  - What does Thunder bring to the story?
  - Does Thunder do anything that changes the story?
  - Why is Thunder so important to the books?
- 6) Discussing Emma Beswetherick's style of writing and Anna Woodbine's art.
  - Challenge pupils to summarise the writer's and illustrator's style. You could present some questions as discussion prompts:
    - How does Emma Beswetherick describe her characters?
    - Why do you think Thunder is in the book?
    - What is the main message in this book?
    - How do Anna Woodbine's illustrations match the text?

- Why do you think most of the illustrations are black and white?
- Why are some of the pages black with white writing?
- Find a double spread illustration. Why do you think the writer and illustrator chose to include pages like this?

Younger readers can do this verbally rather than in the written form.

How would you summarise their styles in three words:

Emma Beswetherick:

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Anna Woodbine:

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## **Writing**

- 1) Recount writing in the form of a diary, letter or email.

Task	Retell an event from the book
Purpose	Recount
Audience	Diary (audience is the person who owns the diary – writing in role) Letter/email (choose who is writing to who)

Explain that we can use many different forms of writing to recount an event. You could tell the pupils which event to recount – or let them choose. Additionally, you could let them choose whose diary they want to write – include Thunder in the list too!

Remind pupils to use time adverbials to structure their recounts:

<i>First</i>	<i>Next</i>	<i>After that</i>	<i>Then</i>
<i>Not long after</i>	<i>So</i>	<i>Soon after</i>	<i>Finally</i>

Model an example for the pupils – focus on:

- How to start – what is the greeting?
- First sentence – set out what you are doing
- Recount the event using time adverbials
- What will your final sentence be?
- Sign off your diary, letter or email (model different examples, Thunder may say... “*Meow for now!*”)

2) Recipe for the perfect playdate adventure.

What will we need for the perfect playdate adventure?

Think about more abstract characteristics like – courage, bravery, creativity, determination, sense of humour etc.

Share some imperative verbs:

<i>Pour</i>	<i>Mix</i>	<i>Put</i>	<i>Place</i>
<i>Spoon</i>	<i>Stir</i>	<i>Spread</i>	<i>Fold</i>

Share some measurements:

<i>ml</i>	<i>grams</i>	<i>ounces</i>	<i>tablespoon</i>	<i>litre</i>
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Explain/model what a recipe looks like and what sections are needed.

- A title: ‘*How to \_\_\_\_\_*’
- A ‘*What you need*’ section
- A ‘*Method*’ section

3) Character description (choose a character to track appearance, personality, behaviour, how they speak, reaction)

Share the brief character descriptions from the front of each book with the pupils.

Explain that we are going to write more detailed character descriptions than those provided.



Give the pupils some headings to make some notes about their chosen character.

My character is called \_\_\_\_\_

Appearance	Personality	Family	Behaviour
Strengths	Weaknesses	How she/he talks	How she/he reacts

4) Setting description.

Use some of the descriptions from the books to identify features we expect to see in a description.

Use page 44 from *The Magic Ocean Slide* and share the description of the wooden pirate ship.

Share some more examples from the book too.

Challenge the pupils to rewrite a description using similar features.

5) Writing a story in a similar style (person's house/decide on adventure/wish/get there/what issue or mission/charm and ending).

Challenge the pupils to write the next story in *The Playdate Adventures*.

Share a planning sheet that shows the ingredients needed for an adventure, as shown by Emma Beswetherick.

<b>Title for your playdate adventure</b>	
<b>Whose house will the adventure be at?</b>	
<b>Where will they decide to go? How will they get there?</b>	
<b>What is their wish?</b>	

<b>What do they see when they open their eyes?</b>	
<b>What is their mission?</b>	
<b>How do they solve the problem?</b>	
<b>What charm will they get?</b>	

Younger writers could plan this story together and write it as a class story instead of individually.

### **Speaking & Listening**

1) Big Questions – philosophical:

- *Why do you think Thunder can speak when they go on their adventures?*
- *Which girl do you think is the bravest/strongest/most entertaining?*
- *If you really wish for something, could it actually happen?*
- *Do you think the world would be a better place if animals and birds could talk?*
- *Are all challenges difficult?*
- *When things are difficult, how can you stop yourself from giving up? What do Katy, Zia, Cassie and Thunder do?*
- *How could you save the world, one small step at a time?*

2) Speeches – choose an issue to talk about in an assembly to the school community.

3) Questions regarding the next book:

- Where could the next playdate adventure be?
- What other world issues could be in a book? Explore conservation issues and other problems that could be highlighted in the form of a novel.

### **Non-fiction writing opportunities:**

1. Campaign writing – creating posters or fact-files/leaflets to highlight the content of the topic raised in the book.

2. Persuasive writing – letter writing to somebody/an organisation about an issue covered in one of the books (research a topic and write to local councils/your local MP/charities etc). Younger writers could present this as a collaborative letter where they each offer their own ideas and reasons to write.
3. Non-chronological reports – choose a topic to research and present the information as a report (use digital media to create electronic versions to increase awareness of recycling). Younger writers could be supported with pictures of their topic to write about.

**Cross-curricular activities:**

1. Art: choose a theme that is explored in one of the books and an artist to paint/draw in the style of.
2. Art: create Modroc or clay scenes inspired from a description in one of the books.
3. Music: after reading one of the books, identify the main message of the book. Challenge pupils to write and perform a song (to the tune of a familiar song) that will raise awareness of the topic. These creations could be recorded to share with the wider school community.
4. Science: identify the environmental topic in the book and research/explore the science links. Identify and research other world issues that could form the content for future playdate adventures.
5. Geography: identify the locations of the adventures (e.g. the North Pole) and research them.