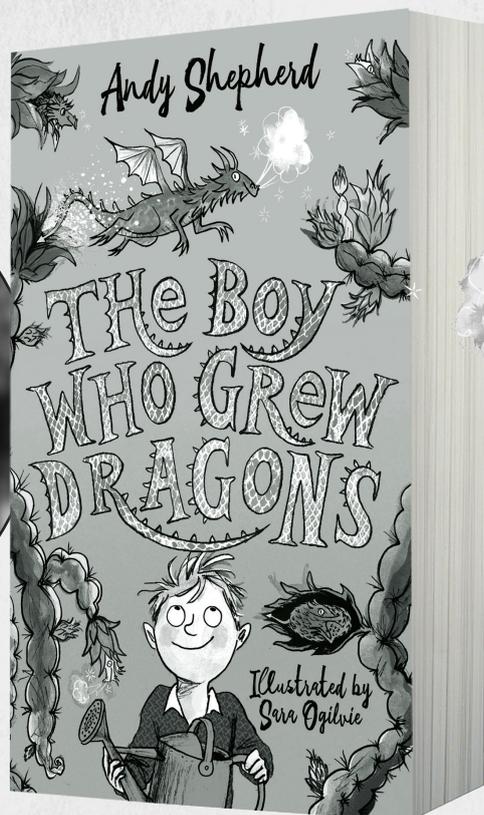


THE BOY WHO GREW DRAGONS

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



THESE FUN AND ENGAGING ACTIVITIES ARE AIMED AT AGES 6+ BUT MANY CAN BE ADAPTED FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

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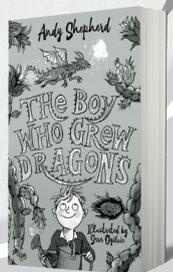
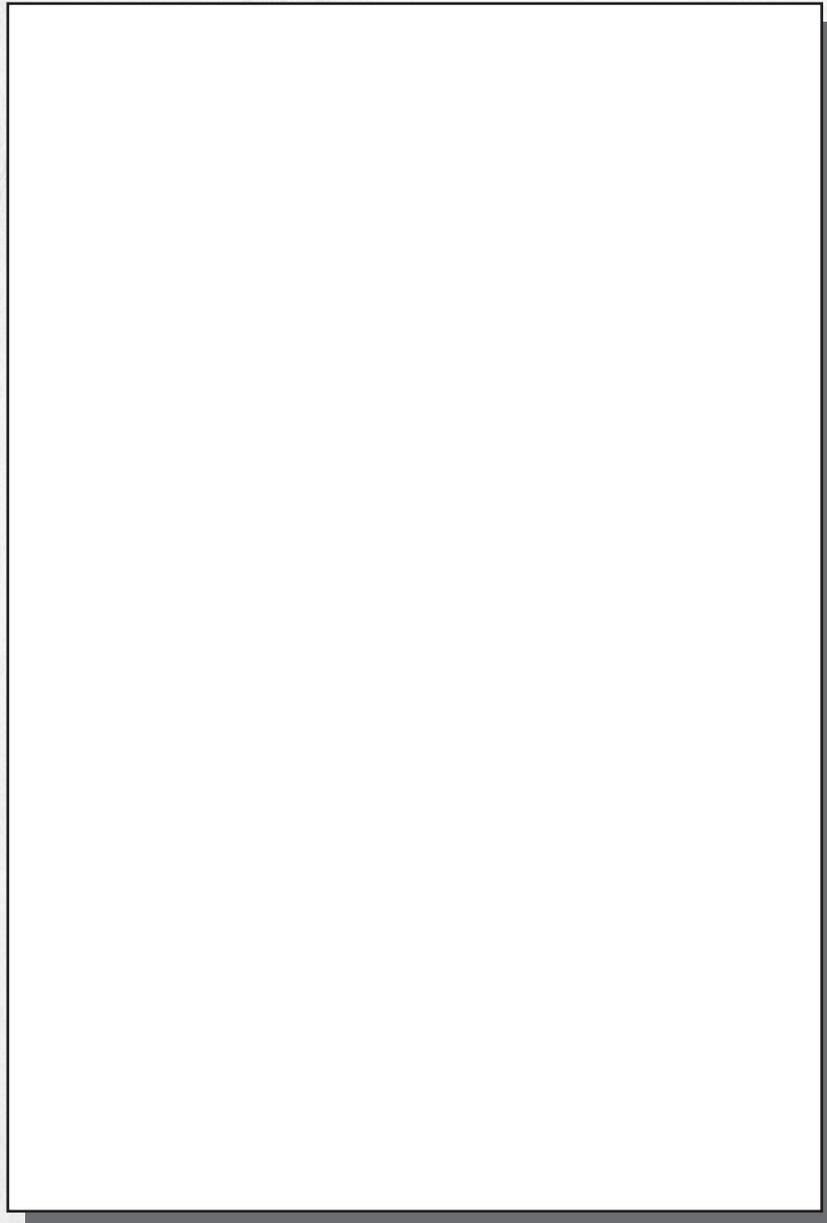
ACTIVITY ONE

LOOKING AT THE COVER

**ART &
DESIGN**

The wonderful artwork for the cover and inside illustrations of *The Boy Who Grew Dragons* have been created by illustrator Sara Ogilvie with book cover design by Nick Stearn.

1. What are your first thoughts on looking at the cover?
2. What do you think might be the consequences of growing dragons?
3. Describe Tomas and Flicker. What do the illustrations suggest about their characters and their relationship?
4. What would you most like to grow in your back garden and why?
5. Design a front cover for the book about what you would grow.



ACTIVITY TWO

THE DAY I GREW A DRAGON - MY DIARY

CREATIVE
WRITING

When Tomas finds the dragon fruit, he could have just thrown it onto the bonfire – especially when it looked like it was covered in mould! But he didn't and he took it home.

1. Imagine you are like Tomas and have found a dragon-fruit tree. Write a diary entry about the day. (Remember to lay it out like a diary entry with the date at the top.)

Include:

- Where did you find the dragon-fruit tree?
- Who were you with?
- What did you do?
- Where did you put the fruit when you got home, and what happened when the dragon first appeared?
- What did it look like? And what did it do first?
- Think about what it felt like when you saw the dragon.

Tomas immediately thought he was going to have '... the most utterly mind-blowingly amazingest pet of all time.'

2. Describe what hopes you have, now you have your own dragon.

ACTIVITY THREE

WHAT WOULD YOU GROW?

CREATIVE
WRITING &
ART AND
DESIGN

Tomas finds a dragon-fruit tree and grows dragons in his garden.

- What would you grow in your back garden and why? Perhaps money or wishes or kittens?
- Draw and then name your special plant or tree.
- Write a list of instructions about how to look after your plant or tree.
- Imagine you were writing a book based on your tree. What would the title of the book be?



ACTIVITY FOUR

GROW YOUR OWN DRAGON

CREATIVE
WRITING

Flicker isn't the only dragon to grow on the tree. And Tomas and his friends soon discover that all dragons are different. But they also find that the fruit seems to drop into the hand of the person most suited to look after them. They share a connection.

1. What would your dragon be like? Write a description of your dragon – not just what they look like but their personality too.

Remember it's important to know as much as possible about your dragon so you can look after them properly. Be sure to include lots of detail to show what makes your dragon unique.

- Maybe it has six tails each with a different tip, or no tail at all?
- Maybe it has wings like a dragonfly or wings that roll up or are super-stretchy?
- Does it have horns or spikes?
- Is it all one colour or multi-coloured?
- Does it breathe fire or ice or something else?
- Does it have any special powers? What are they?
- What kind of place does it come from? Does this affect what it looks like and how it behaves?
- What does it like to eat?
- Are there particular things it likes/doesn't like? Or is frightened of?
- What is it called?

Sometimes I like to make up words or put two words together to describe something.

One of my favourite picture books is called *Sylvia and Bird* by Catherine Rayner. And yes, you guessed it, it's a story about a dragon! In it Catherine describes Sylvia the dragon as '*shimmershiny*'.

If I was making up a word to describe Flicker I think I might use:

'Glitterbright' or **'Sparkbright'**

2. Can you make a whole new word to describe your dragon?

3. Now, what do you think it might be like to live with a dragon? And not just any dragon, but your dragon?

- a) What problems might your dragon cause?
- b) What excitement and fun might a dragon bring to your day?



ACTIVITY FIVE

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

COMPREHENSION
& CREATIVE
WRITING

In chapter 1 Tomas takes the strange spiky fruit home and discovers it's a dragon fruit. But he hardly expects a dragon to appear. As he says, "If someone gives you a fairy cake, you don't expect Tinkerbell to pop out, do you?" So he leaves it on his desk and goes downstairs for tea.

'And that probably wasn't the best idea. You know, because of what happened next.'

1. Read the first chapter in full.

a) What do you think will happen next? Why? Make predictions and discuss.

b) Write the scene when Tomas comes back into the room. What does he see and do?

2. Now read chapter 3 to find out what really happened.

ACTIVITY SIX

DRAGONS VS CUCUMBERS

CREATIVE
WRITING

Tomas quickly discovers that growing dragons is A LOT more trouble than growing cucumbers. Here's a passage from the beginning of the book.

'Things cucumbers do not do:

Poo in your dad's porridge

Singe your eyebrows

Make a really cosy nest by shredding all your mum's alphabetically ordered recipes

Leave your pants (the embarrassing ones covered in diggers) hanging from the TV aerial

Chase your cat

Drop cabbages on your cat

Try and ride your cat like a rodeo bull

Wake you up at 4 a.m. every morning by digging razor-sharp claws into your forehead

Set light to your toothbrush WHILE IT'S STILL IN YOUR MOUTH.'

1. Write your own list of things cucumbers do not do but dragons do.



ACTIVITY SEVEN

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT

COMPREHENSION

1. Write character profiles for Tomas and Flicker. Use examples from the book to illustrate your description.
2. At the beginning, Tomas thinks Flicker is going to be the 'the most utterly mind-blowingly amazingest pet of all time'. Is this how Tomas sees Flicker by the end? Can you find examples in the story to show any changes?

ACTIVITY EIGHT

'YOU GREW A WHAT?' WRITING DIALOGUE

CREATIVE
WRITING

1. Imagine the conversation between Tomas and Ted when Ted first sees Flicker. Write it below and remember to punctuate your speech correctly.

Think about the rules of writing dialogue:

1) New speaker, new line

*'Where's your homework?' asked the teacher.
'My dragon scorched it,' he replied.*

2) Use a small letter after the speech closes

'There is a poo in my porridge!' shrieked Dad.

3) Keep all punctuation inside speech marks

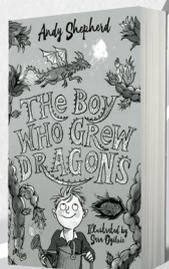
'Put that fire out! Quick!' screamed the teacher.

4) Use action to create atmosphere

'I'm not sure what you mean,' he said, quickly nudging the smouldering sock under the bed. 'I don't smell burning.'

5) Vary the use of 'said'

'Do you think he'll notice the claw marks?' I whispered.



ACTIVITY NINE

A WORLD OF DRAGONS AND DRAGON FRUIT

RESEARCH

When Tomas goes to the library to find out more about dragons, he finds there are lots of different types all over the world.

1. Find out what you can about how dragons differ around the world. Include facts about what they look like, as well as how they are perceived by people.
2. Dragons appear in lots of stories. How many different dragons can you find in books?
3. Write a Top Trumps style fact file about each one.

Dragon-fruit trees really are AMAZING! Tomas's grandad describes the one in his garden as looking like 'a giant upturned mophead', but 'green and spiky and knobbly'.

Tomas says: 'Sprouting from some of the cactus arms were vivid yellow and orange tendrils, like bursts of flames. And on each of those nestled a fruit . . . all of them had weird spiky pineapple-like leaves.'

4. Do some research and find some pictures of dragon-fruit trees. Do you think Tomas and his grandad's descriptions are accurate?
5. There is something special about the flowers on dragon-fruit trees – can you find out what it is?
6. List five interesting facts about dragon-fruit trees and share with your friends.



ACTIVITY TEN

GET CREATIVE!

CREATIVE
WRITING

1. Tomas dreams of flying over an icy land with volcanoes and glaciers. Write a dream sequence where you imagine riding your dragon.
 - a) Where are you flying?
 - b) What does it feel like?
 - c) What can you see?
 - d) Use similes and metaphors in your writing to describe what it's like to soar so high in the sky.
2. Write a letter to a friend describing what it's like to live with your dragon. Tell them about the fun parts, but also any problems or challenges you face.
3. Write from the point of view of a parent talking about the strange things that have been happening in your house. How might you explain it all?
4. Write a scene from the point of view of a dragon that has just hatched from a dragon fruit.
 - a) What does it see?
 - b) How does it feel?
 - c) Is there anything that scares it?

ACTIVITY ELEVEN

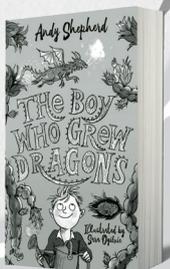
WRITING A POEM

CREATIVE
WRITING

I love gardens, especially secret or overgrown gardens.
You never know what you might find!

Do one of the following:

1. Find a picture of an overgrown garden. Write a poem or descriptive paragraph about the garden and see if you can use personification, metaphor and simile in your description.
2. Look at the description of Grandad in chapter 1 of *The Boy Who Grew Dragons*. Write a poem or descriptive paragraph describing a member of your own family using metaphor and simile.
3. Look at the line: 'Dug. And scraped. And pulled. And heaved' in chapter 1. See if you can use simple lines of synonyms like this to write a poem. For example, 'Danced. And jiggled. And jived. And tangoed!' or 'Cried. And wept. And balled. And blubbered.'



ACTIVITY TWELVE

S'MORES GALORE

ART &
DESIGN

Tomas and his friends find that having a dragon can make for some brilliant snacks. Ted's dragon is particularly helpful when it comes to making s'mores.

So, what is a s'more? It's a traditional camping snack. In its most basic form it's a sandwich of toasted marshmallow and chocolate between crackers or biscuits. Deeeeelicious!

But of course you can customise them – which is exactly what Tomas and his friends (known as 'the superhero squad') do.

1. Look up some s'mores recipes and then invent your own.
2. Write out a list of ingredients and clear instructions. Then make and enjoy!

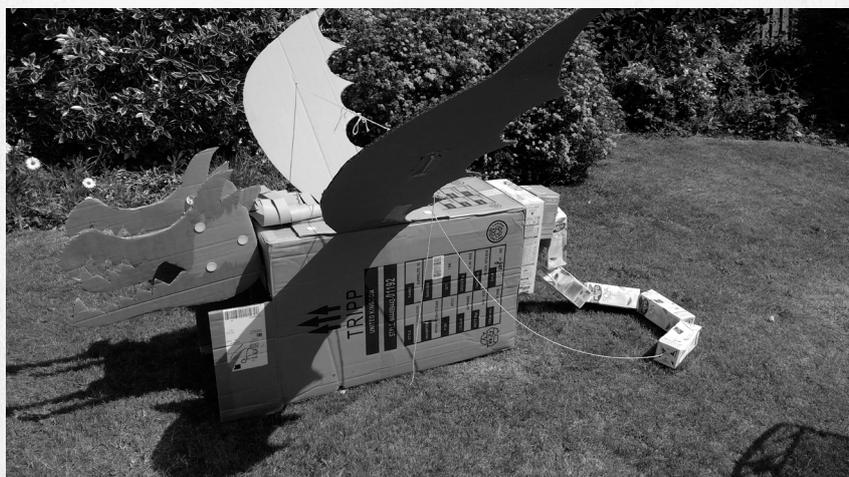
ACTIVITY THIRTEEN

DESIGN A DRAGON-FRUIT TREE

ART &
DESIGN

Do one of the following:

1. As a class, design your own dragon-fruit tree. Make some colourful dragons to stick around it.
2. Collect cardboard boxes and create a junk-model dragon – can you make the wings and tail movable?



3. Design your own board game like snakes and ladders. Include things like 'You have found an ice dragon – slide on 3 places' or 'A dragon burned your homework – miss a turn'.

ACTIVITY FOURTEEN

BOOK TRAILERS – CREATE YOUR OWN VIDEO

MEDIA

Visit the website Authors All Together (<https://flipgrid.com/14b38f>) and watch a few videos of authors talking about their books.

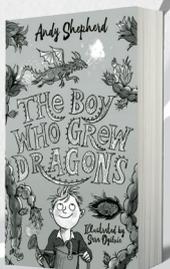
1. Now make your own video.

- a. You could make one for *The Boy Who Grew Dragons*, or you could tell people about your favourite book.
- b. Or make one for your own book! (See Activity Three) You could design your own front cover, write a blurb, write the story and then introduce it on camera!



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BOY WHO GREW DRAGONS

1. Imagine you could grow dragons in your own garden. What would your dragon be like? What would it look? Would it have any special powers or abilities?
2. Now you have read the opening of *The Boy Who Grew Dragons*, you will see that it is not all fun and games having a dragon in your house!
 - a) What other problems do you think having a dragon might cause?
 - b) What would be the advantages of having your very own dragon?
3. Family and friendship are very important in *The Boy Who Grew Dragons*:
 - a) What does family mean to you?
 - b) Write a card to someone in your family telling them why they are important to you.
4. Tomas goes to the library to find out more about the dragons. He learns that there are different dragons all over the world. How many different dragons can you find out about and how do they differ from each other?
5. Tomas has a very big imagination, but he also notices the little things around him. Like a snail on a bush or a mouldy-looking fruit in his grandad's garden! He sees the world with his eyes wide open, full of wonder.
 - a) Go outside and take a little walk around. What can you hear? Smell? See? Notice as much as you can. Then choose one thing: a leaf, a stone, a bug. Describe it to someone in as much detail as you can. What does it look like? What does it feel like? Does it remind you of anything else?
 - b) Stories often start with questions. For *The Boy Who Grew Dragons* it was: 'What if dragons really did grow inside dragon fruit?' Can you think of a 'What if' question for the object you have been studying?



READ ABOUT MORE DRAGONS

I love dragons and I love books about dragons. Here are some of my favourites. Why not find and read a few of these? Do you have a favourite? Maybe you could write a book review to encourage other people to read it.

Tell Me a Dragon by Jackie Morris

Sylvia and Bird by Catherine Rayner

How to Train Your Dragon series by Cressida Cowell

The Reluctant Dragon by Kenneth Grahame

Dragonology by Douglas Carrell

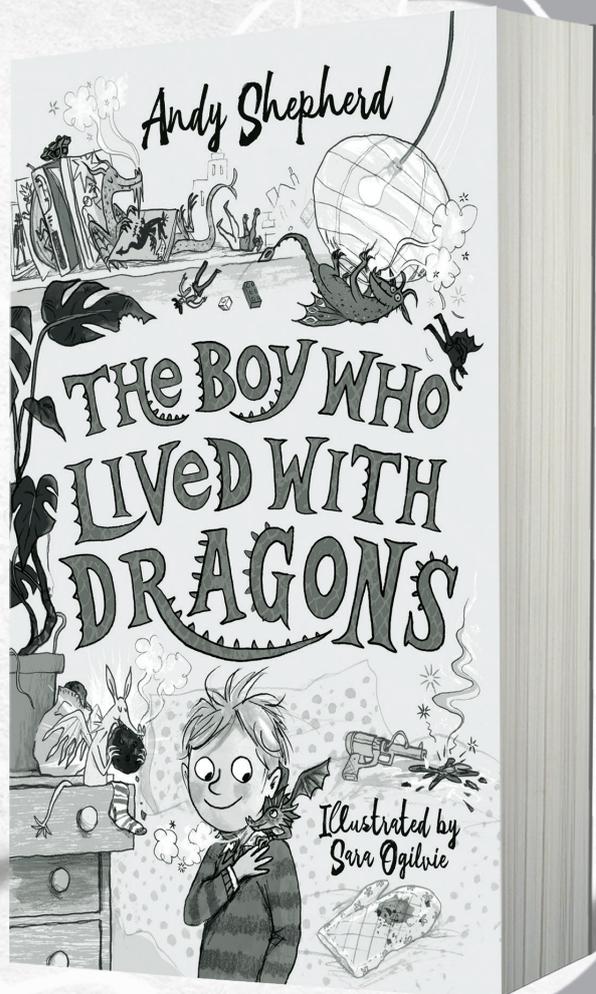
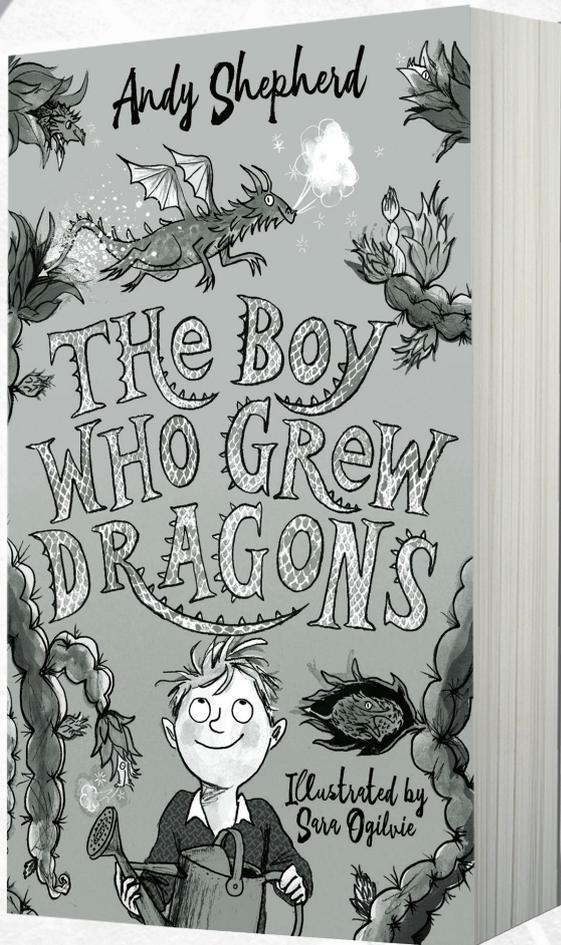
The Lonely Sea Dragon by Helen Dunmore

Ace Dragon Ltd by Russell Hoban with illustrations by Quentin Blake

The Dragon Machine written by Helen Ward with illustrations by Wayne Anderson

The Emperor of Absurdia by Chris Riddell





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DESIGN YOUR OWN DRAGON INSIDE THIS DRAGON FRUIT

