

LESSON 1: WHAT IS HAITI'S STORY?

Age range 7-11 years Time: 1 hour

Outline <p>Pupils will start by taking a look at the best-known recent story from Haiti in Western countries: the 2010 earthquake. It is likely to be the only story about Haiti they or others in Western countries know. Yet, like any other country, Haiti is country with multiple stories of which the earthquake is only a single element. Pupils will use images to question their assumptions about Haiti and then study an extract from <i>Eight Days: A story of Haiti</i> by Edwidge Danticat to inspire creative writing. <i>Eight Days</i> tells the fictional story of a boy trapped under the rubble for eight days after the earthquake and how he uses his imagination to keep going until he is rescued.</p>		
Learning objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop knowledge of Haiti and begin to build a picture of Haiti based on more than one story. To empathise with how the use of imagination can help in difficult times. To use descriptive language and detail to build a vivid image of memories. 	Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils will write their own version of <i>Eight Days</i> using detail and descriptive language to bring their own memories to life. 	
Key questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Haiti like? What happened in the earthquake? How did Junior help himself get through being trapped? What detail and imagery can I add to the description of my memory to give the reader a vivid understanding of it? 	Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slideshow 1 – Stories from Haiti: up to 2010. <i>Extract from Eight Days: A story from Haiti</i> by Edwidge Danticat, Orchard Books (or copy of the book). Sticky notes. For wall display: printed photographs of the Haiti earthquake (see slideshow 1). Background notes for teachers. 	
Curriculum links		
England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils note and develop their initial ideas, drawing on a range of material. Pupils choose their grammar and vocabulary carefully to enhance the meaning of what they write. Pupils become increasingly familiar with texts from other cultures and traditions. 	Wales Reading Range: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiencing and responding to a wide range of texts that include: texts from other cultures. Writing Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the characteristic features of literary and non-literary texts in their own writing, adapting their style to suit the audience and purpose. Use the standard forms of English: nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, connectives and verb tenses. 	Scotland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in an appropriate way for my purpose and use suitable vocabulary for my audience. LIT 2-26a



Activity Outline

Starter (10 mins)

Stories from Haiti working wall

- Note that part of the purpose of this starter activity is to begin building a working wall about stories from Haiti which can be added to in future lessons.
- Ask pupils if they know what an earthquake is. Are any aware that there was a large earthquake which hit Haiti's capital city of Port-au-Prince in January 2010? Show pupils where Haiti is using slides 3 and 4 of slideshow 1 and then ask them to note anything they know about this earthquake or earthquakes in general on sticky notes. Select pupils to share their answers.
- Ask pupils how they know about earthquakes in general or about the one in Haiti (this is likely to be from the media in the form of television or radio news and newspapers). Show pupils slide 5 as an example of a source of stories about Haiti. Do pupils know any other stories about Haiti? If so, they can add these to their sticky notes. Place all notes on the working wall.

Activity 1.1 (10 mins)

What is Haiti like? Use adjectives to describe photographs

- Show slide 6. In pairs, ask pupils to brainstorm words which describe the photograph, such as messy, crowded or flooded. Select pupils to share some of these and point out that if pupils only saw this image of Haiti, they might think this is Haiti's whole story, rather than the single story it is telling. Now show pupils slides 7 and 8 of the UK. If this was the only image a Haitian child had ever seen about England, would they have an accurate understanding of the country? Why not? Draw out all-or-nothing assumptions such as how they might think all buildings are old, all buildings have clock towers or that there are no green fields. Now show slides 9-13, which give other views of Haiti. Point out that the more images of a country we see, the more accurate our understanding will be because we move from having a single story to having multiple stories.
- Show slide 14 and tell pupils that they will be finding out about some of Haiti's other stories, not just those told through images but also a selection of historical, geographical, newspaper and personal stories of Haiti. Finish by pointing out that many of these stories affected both the scale of devastation caused by the earthquake and speed of rebuilding afterwards.

Activity 1.2 (30 mins)

Extract from Haitian story: Eight Days

- Show slide 15 and point to the title 'Krik? Krak!' giving the explanation of its meaning from the slide notes.
- Next introduce the extract from *Eight Days* to the class using *Extract from Eight Days: A story from Haiti by Edwidge Danticat* or the whole book if you have it.
- As a class, analyse the structure of *Eight Days*, noting how Danticat encourages the reader to empathise with how Junior was feeling at the start and end and how in each of the eight days Junior imagines fun activities he carried out before the earthquake. Then focus on the line: "But in my mind, I played." Ask pupils why this might have helped Junior through this difficult time.



- Explain to pupils that they are going to write their own versions of *Eight Days* in pairs, imagining they were trapped like Junior. Tell pupils to sit without doing anything other than think about their ideas for two or three minutes so that they can begin to understand how long the day might feel with nothing to do.
- Next ask pupils to share memories of activities they would think about to help keep them going through each long day with their partners. Encourage them to include details as Danticat has, such as “It was a windy day and our kites went high up into the sky” to bring their memories to life for their readers. You can also encourage pupils to use descriptive language such as adjectives, adverbs and similes to help the reader imagine their memory as vividly as possible. Pupils can then write alternate days with their partners for their own versions of *Eight Days*.

Differentiation

Make it easier: place pupils in groups of four and ask them to write two days each instead of four.

Make it harder: ask pupils to make use of more adjectives, adverbs, alliteration and similes in their descriptions of their memories.

Plenary (10 mins)

- Select pupils to share their favourite imagined day with the class. Finish by discussing how they would feel on being rescued and finding their family alive on the eighth day. You may like to point out that while Junior survived many others did not and so their emotions might be mixed.

Further idea

- Ask pupils to draw illustrations to accompany their writing and display as a frieze.



Background notes for teachers

Stories from Haiti

Create a working wall about *Stories from Haiti* to be used and added to throughout the unit of work. Begin by printing off a few images from the slides and then adding pupils' post-it notes of what they know about Haiti and earthquakes already. As you progress through the lessons, add new images and notes written by the pupils to demonstrate the progression from a single story about the earthquake to multiple stories about a country with a rich historical heritage and resilient people. Remember to continue to print off other images as you come across them.

You might like to watch an excellent talk entitled 'The Danger of the Single Story' given by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie about the dangers of knowing or telling only a single story about a person or place.

http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.

Eight Days

Eight Days: A story of Haiti is a children's picture book, written by Haitian author Edwidge Danticat and beautifully illustrated by Alix Delinois. If you are able to get hold of a copy of the book it will be a great stimulus for the lesson. However, you can also teach the lesson using slide 16 on slideshow 1 and the extract below.

Edwidge Danticat is a Haitian author who was born in Port-au-Prince and moved to the USA when she was 12. She revisits Haiti regularly and has published many stories about Haiti. In common with many other writers and artists who created work in response to the earthquake, she wrote *Eight Days* as a response to such difficult events. Danticat wrote *Eight Days* as a way of helping her young daughter through an anxious time:

"[My daughter] continued to worry about others who might be trapped under their houses. So I carefully told her about a few people, among them some children, who had been miraculously rescued. And in that process this story was born."

Danticat describes an event on her return to Haiti after the earthquake: "When I returned to Haiti after the earthquake, a ninety-four-year old former school teacher [and family friend]... grabbed both my hands and said, 'Thank God your children knew Haiti before all this.'"



Extract from *Eight Days: A story of Haiti* by Edwidge Danticat

Eight Days is the story of Junior, a seven-year-old boy trapped beneath his house after the Port-au-Prince earthquake and his joyous rescue. Junior's sparkling imagination helps him find the strength to survive.

When I was pulled from under my house, eight days after the earthquake, my family was there waiting.

The following day, everyone asked me,

Were you afraid?

Were you sad?

Did you cry?

I was brave, I told them, but when the earth shook again and again, I was afraid. And sometimes I cried, because I missed Manman and Papa and my little sister, Justine. But in my mind, I played.

On the first day, I flew my kite. And my best friend, Oscar, who was with me when my house fell, flew his kite, too. It was a windy day and our kites went high up into the sky.

Later, Oscar and I started a game of marbles. We invited all the kids in our neighbourhood to play with us. It was the biggest game of marbles ever played in our neighbourhood, in the entire country, in the entire world!

On the second day, Oscar and I played hide-and- seek. We hid in a dark, dusty corner of the house...

Junior goes on to remember and imagine other scenes from his life before the earthquake: visiting his father's barber shop, singing in his choir, playing football, playing in puddles in the rain, riding bicycles.

He finishes by describing how he felt when he was rescued on the eighth day:

On the eighth day, when they finally found me, I was so happy, because I could feel the hot sun on my skin and see the bright blue sky. I could see Manman and Papa and Justine, too.

I tell you, I hugged them so tight I thought I would never let go.

From EIGHT DAYS: A STORY OF HAITI by Edwidge Danticat, pictures by Alix Delinois. Scholastic Inc./Orchard Books. Text copyright © 2010 by Edwidge Danticat, illustrations copyright © 2010 by Alix Delinois. Used by permission.

