# SPOOKY STORIES FOR EFL EDUCATION – A CHILLING MATERIAL PACKAGE

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Abstract – Tiivistelmä

Kirjallisuuden käytöllä kielten opetuksessa on pitkät perinteet ja siihen liittyviä hyötyjä ja haittoja on tutkittu paljon (esim. Sun 2021). Kirjallisuuden käyttöä on perusteltu esimerkiksi materiaalin autenttisuudella, kielellisellä monipuolisuudella, sekä kulttuurintuntemukseen liittyvillä tekijöillä (Collie & Slater 1987). Erityisesti kirjallisuuden kyky herättää ajatuksia ja tunteita on koettu sen vahvuudeksi, mutta tämän hyödyntäminen on jäänyt kieltenopetuksessa sivuosaan. Myös suomalaisia englannin oppikirjoja tarkastellessani huomasin, että ne sisältävät kirjallisuutta vain pieniä määriä ja siihen liittyvät tehtävät keskittyvät enimmäkseen luetunymmärtämiseen sekä kielellisiin elementteihin. Samaan aikaan on ollut kasvavaa huolta suomalaisten nuorten lukutaidosta, sillä nuoret lukevat perinteistä kirjallisuutta vapaa-ajallaan yhä vähemmän (Hanifi 2021).

Tämä materiaalipaketti on suunniteltu peruskoulun yhdeksännelle luokalle, ja se käsittelee kirjallisuutta vaihtoehtoisesta näkökulmasta: tavoitteena on innostaa oppilaita lukemaan lisää vapaa-ajallaan. Materiaalina toimivat kolme jännitysnovellia, jotka on pyritty valitsemaan oppilaiden mieltymyksiin perustuen. Novellien pohjalta on rakennettu kuuden oppitunnin kokonaisuus, jossa sovelletaan luovan pedagogiikan (*creative pedagogy*) aatteita. Monipuolisissa tehtävissä oppilaat esittävät novelleista omia näkemyksiään, keskustelevat niissä esiintyvistä teemoista ja inspiroituvat lukemastaan tehden omia tuotoksiaan. Opettajan rooli on rakentaa kannustava ilmapiiri, olla avoin oppilaiden ideoille sekä auttaa heitä suoriutumaan tehtävistä.

Materiaalipaketti harjoittaa oppilaita lukemaan englanniksi turvallisessa ja paineettomassa ympäristössä. Kielitaidon lisäksi he oppivat, kuinka kirjallisuudesta voi keskustella ja mitä elementtejä kuuluu kirjallisuuden analysointiin.

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# 1   INTRODUCTION

This teaching package aims to promote reading as a source for English language learning. The second aim is to teach the basics of literary analysis to ninth graders in the Finnish lower secondary school. Three horror short stories were chosen as reading material, and the tasks in this thesis are based on creative pedagogy.

My inspiration for this topic arises from the qualitative Bachelor's Thesis I conducted in 2017. In this study, I investigated Finnish university students' experiences regarding the use of literature in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom, revealing that literature had not been commonly used in their previous language education. In addition, my own experiences teaching English in a Finnish upper secondary school reveal that many of the first-year students do not have previous experience with literature. This was evident from the confusion and stress students faced when they were asked to do extensive reading or discuss and write about literature in English. As the 9th grade precedes the first year of upper secondary school, it became the natural target group for this material package.

In this thesis, I will discuss literature in the context of EFL education, the role of reading in Finland, and also investigate how literature is presented in the current 9th-grade EFL textbooks used in Finland. I will propose that literature should have a constant presence in EFL education due to its many benefits (Collie & Slater 1987;

Murphy 1997; Armstrong 2015). and have designed this material package for lower secondary school for this reason. The aim is also to prepare students for the EFL classes in upper secondary school, where they are often required to read and discuss literature in English. The material package aims to provide students with interesting and authentic reading materials that can encourage them to become active readers themselves.

The material package is preceded by a discussion of relevant background theory: the second chapter reviews literature and reading in the context of EFL education. The third chapter concentrates on creative pedagogy which acts as a pedagogical framework for the material package. The fourth chapter is a textbook analysis that investigates the role of literature in current EFL textbooks. The fifth chapter introduces the actual material package which can be found at the of the thesis.

# 2 LITERATURE & READING

## 2.1 Defining literature

In this thesis, the term literature is in a central role. The definition of literature has changed throughout the centuries, and it would be impossible to discuss all the different definitions. Therefore, I have attempted to choose some of the most relevant examples and especially concentrate on literature in the context of EFL education. My purpose is to discuss what separates literature from the text types present in most EFL textbooks that are normally used to teach EFL.

The meaning of literature has been a topic for many authors, researchers, and philosophers. The Oxford English Dictionary defines literature as a "result or product of literary activity" (Oxford University Press 2023). The term is also used for a set of known literary works from a certain country, language, or time period. In language education, the term is used to describe non-informative texts portraying imaginary characters or events, and are separate from texts designed for language learners (Collie & Slater 1987).

Cárdenas Páez describes literature as "a poetic form of art that creates a new world through language" (2011: 6, translated from Spanish). By examining each element of

this seemingly simple definition, we can gain a better understanding of what literature entails. First of all, the term "poetic" in this regard means the emotional and imaginative character of literature and the effect it has on the reader. Literature can be understood as a dialogue between the reader and the text, in which each side challenges the views of the other, provoking and creating new thoughts and arguments (Cárdenas Páez 2011: 12). According to Miller (2003: 20), literary texts have the potential to change the beliefs and opinions of its reader, which can affect their behavior in the real world. This ability to provoke emotional and intellectual responses is an agreed characteristic of literature (Widdowson 2014: 32).

Next, the creation of a new, alternative world appears regularly in literature definitions. Literature as an art form is always a product of the culture, history, and identity of its creator (Cárdenas Páez 2011: 8). However, it is important to recognize that literature does not provide us with a direct reflection of the world of its time, but a representation of it. In other words, although literature can create an illusion of reality by mentioning real people and real place names, the work is still purely an imitation of the real world filtered through its author. Miller (2003: 18), describes writing literature as "the creation or discovery of a new, supplementary world, a metaworld, a hyper-reality", while reading is a way to travel into these alternative worlds.

The final characteristic to be discussed is the type of language used in literature. This does not mean using a certain dialect, grammar, or vocabulary; instead, language in literature usually carries symbolic meanings (Cárdenas Páez 2011: 10). Information is not always simply given to the reader, and instead, the writer keeps them in suspense, requiring them to create their interpretation of the text. McRae (1991) describes the same concept by differentiating "referential" language from "representational" language: referential language is more literal and refers directly to the real world, while representational language is used in literature and is not limited by the real world. In addition, language in literature is not only used to convey messages but also specifically chosen to cause reactions and manipulate emotions in the reader.  Murphy

(1997: 86), makes an interesting distinction about how literature cannot be paraphrased without some of the meaning being lost. If we for example have two pieces of text, a news article and a short story, the news article can be paraphrased without much difficulty. The short story can also be retold, but it will lose some of its meaning and especially its impact on the recipient.

By combining these different arguments, we can attempt to define literature as the following: literature is a text that creates an alternative reality. It provokes readers' thoughts and often requires a level of interpretation.

## 2.2   Literature in the EFL classroom

The use of literature in the foreign language classroom has a long history with different pedagogical and cultural trends. While in the past literature was one of the most prominent sources of authentic reading material, in the current digital era this importance has diminished. There is also a lot more concentration on new, multimodal text types. However, the benefits of using literature in EFL education have remained the same: according to Collie & Slater (1987), there are four clear benefits for reading and studying literature: authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment, and personal involvement. Similar benefits have been described by other researchers (Carter & Long 1991; Murphy 1997; Armstrong 2015) in their studies. In this chapter, I will discuss further the reasoning for using literature in the EFL classroom, as well as the apparent challenges discovered in previous research.

### 2.2.1   Benefits

Perhaps the most commonly mentioned reason for using literature in EFL education is that literature provides authentic reading material originally intended for native speakers of English (Collie & Slater 1987; Cárdenas Páez 2011). This exposure to authentic language input is important for language learners, as it helps them learn to use the language in real-life situations and understand how it functions in its natural

setting. The same cannot be achieved with EFL textbooks, as their content is always designed, or chosen, to teach certain language structures (Collie & Slater 1987: 3). Literature gives an example of real-life language use, including common expressions and, idioms, and grammatical elements (Armstrong 2015), and students will be able to study them in a meaningful context. Literature is also linguistically versatile, containing different forms of language such as narration, dialogue, and irony (Collie & Slater 1987: 4), making the reading experience more imaginative and interesting. In addition, due to its authenticity, literature offers sociolinguistic and pragmatic information; in a dialogue scene, for example, students can observe different levels of politeness between different speakers (Cárdenas Páez 2011: 12).

Authenticity is tightly connected with the idea of language enrichment (Collie & Slater 1987). As already mentioned, literature offers a variety of language and different speech registers, as well as linguistic examples of socioeconomic differences. Literature provides a wealth of vocabulary and linguistic structures that may not be found in more traditional language learning materials. According to Duncan & Paran (2017), both teachers and students see literature as a beneficial tool for vocabulary development, increasing the size of a learner's vocabulary and improving their overall language proficiency. This is because reading literature exposes students to new words, idiomatic expressions, and grammatical structures, which they can then use to improve their language production.

In addition to authenticity and language exposure, literature also provides students with a window into different cultures and perspectives. Cultural enrichment (Collie & Slater 1987) means that literature helps readers understand different cultures - current or historic - through the characters, customs, and events presented in the text. This enables readers to make connections and comparisons between their own lives and the reality presented in the literature, creating opportunities for self-reflection, discussions, and intercultural understanding (Armstrong 2015). Consequently, it can challenge readers' existing beliefs and biases about certain cultures or social groups.

Cárdenas Páez (2011) argues that literature handles universal issues, ideas, and emotions that we can all relate to on a global level. In this manner, literature acts as an important tool for creating unity and solidarity between languages and cultures. It allows students to engage with the cultural beliefs, values, and traditions of the target language community.

The final beneficial quality as described by Collie & Slater (1987) is personal involvement. This refers to the idea of reader engagement and how a literary text can affect readers' perceptions, beliefs, and emotions. This personal connection to literature can affect the life of an individual, leading to self-reflection, new insights, and even personal growth (Collie & Slater 1987). By examining the thoughts and emotions of characters, students can gain a better understanding of themselves, leading to self-reflection and discovery (Murphy 1997). It is argued by Armstrong (2015) that literature can also provide a platform for exploring difficult or taboo topics, allowing readers to confront and better understand their own beliefs and values. Personal involvement is connected to the interpretative character of literature, which allows students to express their own opinions and make suggestions on the meanings behind the text (Armstrong 2015). This makes literature a great tool for practicing argumentation and critical thinking skills, as well as for listening to other perspectives and respectfully discussing them (Widdowson 2014: 34).

### 2.2.2 Challenges

Despite all these beneficial qualities, implementing literature in the EFL classroom is not without its challenges. There have been multiple studies asking both teachers and students how they view literature in the classroom and how much they use it. One of the biggest problems reported by language teachers is a simple one: the lack of time (Armstrong 2015; Luukka 2017; Sun 2021). Time in this case does not mean only the minutes spent in the classroom, but also the time teachers and students have outside of it. The time in the classroom is limited, as teachers have to follow the curriculum and try to reach certain learning objectives. In a case study conducted in China by Sun (2021), four EFL teachers were interviewed on their experience teaching an English

reading program for secondary-level students. The study revealed that teachers struggled with time management and felt that there was not enough time for reading long texts, such as novels, in class (Sun 2021: 157). In this case, the reading task would fall for students to do on their own time, which they also did not have. This caused students not to read the text appointed to them (Sun 2021: 151).

A study by Duncan & Paran (2017) surveyed German high-school students and their opinions on using literature in foreign language education. Their findings reported that a majority of the students had a positive attitude towards literature, seeing it as a beneficial tool for language learning (Duncan & Paran 2017: 82). It is possible that students recognize literature as important, but do not necessarily find reading it enjoyable. Poor student motivation for reading literature was also an issue reported by the teachers in the study by Sun (2021: 157). The problem with motivation is tightly connected to another challenge teachers must face: choosing the text.

Choosing the text is perhaps the biggest question in teaching literature, as the teacher will have to decide who selects the text to be read and for what reason. According to Luukka (2017), the reasons for choosing the text can be divided into three approaches: the language-driven approach, the teacher-driven approach, and the student-driven approach. All these approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. In the studies conducted by Luukka (2017) and Sun (2021), EFL teachers preferred the language-driven approach for selecting literature for reading. This means that the teachers mostly concentrated on the linguistic features and the content of the text (Luukka 2017: 207) and used it to teach elements such as vocabulary or grammar structures. Teachers also selected texts following the teacher-driven approach, which means that they picked texts that they themselves liked or found important (Luukka 2017: 209). The teacher-driven approach is also connected to the lack of time, as teachers report that they do not have time to actively read and search for suitable literature for EFL education. By using this approach, teachers can make sure that the text is appropriate for students' age and language level (Sun 2021).

Both the teacher- and language-driven approaches have their purpose when implementing literature in the classroom, but they are not necessarily the most motivating approach for students. The third option is the student-based approach, in which students decide on the texts themselves. If this is not an option, the teacher can try to pick a text that is interesting and relevant for the students (Luukka 2017: 206). Letting students choose the text can be a tricky situation: the liberty can increase students' reading motivation, but also many students struggle to find appropriate texts for their reading level (Sun 2021). Providing students with suitable and exciting reading options can hopefully make the reading experience more enjoyable and therefore motivating (Armstrong 2015).

A final conflict connected to all the previous issues is the argument that literature is not a relevant source for teaching EFL, nor the best source for reading in the current media landscape. According to Hanifi (2021: 152), it is evident that people read less traditional literature, but instead, they frequently read and create short, multimodal text types, like internet articles, social media posts, messages, and forum entries. All these materials are relevant for students and can be used to create interesting and motivating tasks for EFL, making literature seem old-fashioned and irrelevant (Malminen 2021). In recent decades the focus in EFL education has also moved toward real-life skills and topics that students need in their daily life. This includes favoring communicational and oral skills, and less time is spent on extensive reading and writing (Sell 2005).

However, I would argue that the beneficial elements of literature are still relevant in today's world, where for example historical and cultural awareness and the need for self-reflection are as essential as ever. Literature can still have a role in developing critical thinking skills, especially for children and young people, as complex ideas can be discussed through a fictional setting (Duncan & Paran 2017). Good reading skills are also essential in higher education and work as a positive indicator for academic success. The role of English in Finnish higher education has also increased in recent years: reading academic texts in English is often expected from students despite their

field of study, and there are also some careers offered completely in English (Vilkka 2020). Literature can also be an interesting resource for creative pedagogy and can be used for motivating language learning activities and projects, as I will showcase in this material package.

## 2.3   Reading as a skill

It would be impossible to discuss literature without discussing the act of reading. Grabe & Stoller (2013) define reading as a combination of cognitive processes such as word recognition, syntactic and semantic formation, and memory activation. The purpose for reading, as well as social and cultural elements, are also essential. Much could also be said about the new type of reading skills required in digital environments and multimodal texts of today (Vilkka 2020). However, as it would be impossible to examine all of these aspects of reading in this chapter, I will concentrate on those most relevant to this material package. This will include the differences between first (L1) and second language (L2) reading and a discussion on reading strategies.

### 2.3.1   Reading in L2

Reading in L2 requires many of the same skills as reading in L1, such as word recognition and utilizing correct reading strategies (Hall 2015). Nonetheless, some key differences should be considered by L2 educators. The greatest difference is that children learning to read in their L1 already know how to speak the language. This means that they already have a good understanding of vocabulary and grammar, allowing them to transfer these skills from spoken language to reading written language. The L2 readers do not have this pre-existing knowledge, as they usually learn reading simultaneously with the spoken language, which affects the learning process (Grabe & Stoller 2013: 36-7).  The difference is evident in the reading speed between the first and the second language, as the average reading rate in L2 is significantly slower than in L1. Reading comprehension in L2 is less automatic and the word-recognition process takes more time (Hall 2015: 15).

In contrast, L2 readers usually have better metalinguistic and metacognitive skills compared to L1 readers (Grabe & Stoller 2013). This is a result of studying L2 in a formal setting: before L2 students start reading in a foreign language, they have already studied the different linguistic elements such as letters, grammar, sounds, and vocabulary. As a result, they usually develop greater awareness of these elements. L2 readers have also already learned to read in their first language, meaning that they have experience in this process and know how to utilize different reading and learning strategies (Grabe & Stoller 2013: 40).

Other major differences are related to the purpose of reading. L1 readers have various purposes for reading as they do it naturally as part of their everyday life. According to Grabe & Stoller (2013: 27), there are seven purposes in total: reading to search information, reading to skim, reading to learn, reading to integrate information, reading to write, reading to critique texts, and reading for general comprehension For L2 readers, the purposes for reading are usually more limited. A large part of the L2 reading happens in a formal setting and for the purpose of language learning: the reading materials are often made specifically for L2 learning or include exercises for the students. These differences in purpose and exposure affect the development of reading skills and can be a hindrance to reading motivation among L2 readers (Grabe & Stoller 2013: 49-51).

### 2.3.2   Intensive and extensive reading

When discussing reading in language learning, the two contrasting concepts of intensive and extensive reading are often present (Jacobs & Ferrel 2010; Beglar et al. 2011; Grabe & Stoller 2013). Intensive reading, which has also been called close reading, involves reading a text carefully and in detail. This approach is often used for teaching specific language skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension (Beglar et al. 2011). Intensive reading is often required in language learning tasks and has a strong presence in formal evaluation for reading comprehension. The teacher

usually has a role in choosing the text and instructs and controls the reading process (Jacobs & Farell 2010).

In contrast, extensive reading is based on the idea that the more students read, the better readers they will become (Jacobs & Farell 2010). In other words, students regularly read longer texts to increase their reading comprehension and fluency. The students are encouraged to read for pleasure and general comprehension, instead of focusing on the language elements and understanding every word and nuance of the text. It also is important to either let students choose the texts themselves or try to choose texts that are interesting and motivating for them (Jacobs & Farell 2010; Beglar et al. 2011).

Empirical studies have showcased that extensive reading has the potential to increase interest in reading and motivate students to read outside the classroom. For example, in a study by Beglar et al. (2011), extensive reading and reading for enjoyment improved students' reading motivation compared to the control group practicing intensive reading. In addition, extensive reading has been shown to have a beneficial effect on developing students' general language skills, such as improving fluency and reading comprehension. Regularly reading longer texts has been shown to increase students' reading speed (Jacobs & Farell 2010; Beglar et al. 2011), for example.

One of the aims of this teaching material package is to promote reading for enjoyment. Therefore, the material package utilizes the main principles of extensive reading to increase student motivation and encourage them to read more. The focus is on the general comprehension of the literary texts and students' opinions on them. Additionally, instead of reading to learn structural language elements, reading is used as a source for student imagination and creativity.

## 2.4   Literature and reading in Finland

In this part of the thesis, I will discuss the role of literature and reading in Finland. This includes the national reading trends among teenagers, who are the target group for this teaching material package. Discussion on the use of literature among Finnish language teachers is also included.

### 2.4.1   National reading trends

The role of reading and literature in Finland, as well as on a global scale, has changed significantly in the 21st century. National surveys conducted since the 1980s showcase this development, revealing that Finnish people read fewer books than in the past (Hanifi 2021: 142). One of the main reasons for this is the change in the media landscape due to the internet, social media, and overall digitalization. In other words, people have other avenues to spend their time and have less time for reading.

Concerns over the lack of reading among children and teenagers have been a common topic in the news media and the public discourse for years (Löyttyniemi 2015; Turtola 2019; STT 2021). The topic is important, as good reading skills correspond to better school success in children (Lukukeskus 2020), which is connected to the polarization of reading. Polarization in this case means that there are two categories of people: those who read a lot, and those who read very little or not at all. According to Hanifi (2021: 141-145), people who read a lot are more likely to have a degree in higher education, and their children are also more likely to become active readers themselves. Therefore, schools and teachers in basic education have an important role in shaping students' attitudes toward reading, especially for those whose parents do not actively read. Gender differences are also evident: overall girls read all genres of literature more than boys and regularly score higher in studies evaluating reading skills (Luukka et al. 2008: 168; Hanifi 2021: 141).

As the target group of this material package is 9th graders (aged 15-16), it is important to investigate their reading habits. In a national survey conducted in 2017, different age groups were asked how many books they had read in the last six months. The most common answer among 15-19-year-olds was 1-2 books with 43%, the second answer being none with 25%. The decrease in active reading is clear when compared to the previous age group of 10-14-year-olds (SVT 2017). It is also reported by Hanifi (2021) that young people (15-25-year-olds) read the least number of books, and their reading activity has decreased most among all age groups compared to previous studies. It is however also stated that young people consider reading to be a beneficial activity, but face difficulties in finding appealing literature to read. When it comes to preferences, the most popular genres among young people are fantasy and science fiction, and next thrillers and detective novels (Hanifi 2021: 143).

### 2.4.2   Literature in EFL teaching

It is unclear how much literature is used in EFL teaching in Finland, as teachers have pedagogical autonomy in following the national curriculum. A case study conducted by Luukka (2017), examined this question in the context of upper-secondary education, discovering that literary texts were rarely (67%) used by the responding teachers. An older, similar study from 2008 revealed that 53% of lower secondary language teachers rarely used literary texts in their teaching. Even 28% reported never using literary texts (Luukka et al. 2008: 35, 95). The most popular literary genres utilized in the classroom were poetry, novels, and short stories (Luukka 2017: 205).

A larger-scale study targeting Finnish 9th graders and their language teachers (Luukka et al. 2008) inspected the norms of reading and writing both in school and outside of it. We cannot generalize the conclusions of this study to fit the current time, as the national curriculum, as well as globalization and digitalization, have all changed drastically. The majority of the language teachers reported that they rarely (53%) or never (28%) used literature in their teaching. However, this included also other language teachers than just EFL teachers (Luukka et al. 2008: 95). Students

mostly agreed with the teachers as 35% reported having rarely used literature in the classroom and as many as 49% answered never having used it (Luukka et al. 2008: 97). Additionally, when asked to evaluate their skills in reading literature in a foreign language, 32% of the student respondents answered never having read literature in another language so (Luukka et al. 2008: 137). As mentioned before, even though the results of these studies cannot be directly generalized to the current situation, it can be agreed that using literature in teaching is not common in Finnish foreign language education.

The 2008 study by Luukka et al. also discussed the text types used in language teaching. Again, language teachers answered that literary texts were studied rarely (44%) or sometimes (38%), while students responded with rarely (38%) and never (36%). The study reported that textbooks were the main source for reading in language education (Luukka et al. 2008: 105). There is also less concentration on writing narrative or literary texts in a foreign language (Luukka et al. 2008: 118). It is also interesting that in the 2017 study by Luukka, it was reported that upper secondary EFL teachers had a quite classical view of literature (208). When asked to name some examples of literature, teachers mostly mentioned twentieth-century novels and poetry. There were mentions of well-known authors such as Hemingway and Shakespeare. It can be speculated that this showcases the language-focused approach to reading in Finnish education, or perhaps the English literature university courses the teachers had attended during their studies (Luukka 2017: 208).

Studies have shown that the willingness to use literature to teach EFL varies greatly between teachers, even though it is largely recognized as a beneficial tool for language learning. Teachers who have received training in the matter, and especially those who themselves are avid readers and passionate about literature, are more likely to use it in their teaching (Duncan & Paran 2017: 82). As mentioned before, lack of time is also a common reason among teachers for avoiding literature, and especially limits reading books or other longer texts as part of language education (Sun 2021). Language

textbooks can also be behind the small amount of literature present in EFL education in Finland, as they usually work as the main resource for teaching materials (Luukka 2017). This question will be investigated later in chapter four of this thesis.

To conclude, it seems apparent that reading literature is mostly not present in Finnish language education, even though both teachers and students regard it as a beneficial learning material (Luukka et al. 2008, Luukka 2017). Using literature is mostly connected to the teachers' personal interests and the focus is on a language-based approach. In contrast to these limited observations, this reading material package can be used to bring literature to the classroom by any EFL teacher. It also offers an alternative for language-based reading tasks while taking into account the reading preferences of the target group.

# 3   CREATIVE PEDAGOGY

Similar to the previous main concept of this thesis – literature -- creativity is a complex idea that can be defined in various ways depending on the context. In this chapter, I will discuss creativity and creative pedagogy and examine how they can be implemented in practice.

## 4.1. On creativity

As mentioned, the term creativity is multifaceted. In everyday speech, calling someone 'creative' can mean that they have good artistic abilities, or that they are good at problem-solving, for example. In creativity research, however, it is commonly agreed that creativity is a combination of two main concepts: originality and appropriateness (Beghetto 2005; Kaufman 2016; Tin 2022). This means that creativity involves generating ideas that are new or different, but also appropriate to the given task or situation. This is important, as focusing only on originality would make creativity a nonsensical concept that can have negative and easily dismissible connotations (Beghetto 2005: 256). These two elements stay constant across the research, even though they are sometimes named differently.

This combination of originality and appropriateness is evident in the creative process. Beghetto (2005: 258) suggests that this process has two stages, called the divergent stage and the convergent stage. The divergent stage is better known as the

brainstorming stage, where new, original ideas should be freely generated. In the convergent stage, these ideas are then evaluated for their appropriateness for the task in question. Collaboration is crucial for the creative process, and there should not be restrictions or judgment from external sources (Beghetto 2005; Lin 2011). Tin (2022: 84) calls these two stages idea-generation and idea-exploration. According to them, the idea-generation is the most successful when there are no restrictions and the students do not know the outcome or objective of the task. In the idea-exploration stage, a new objective or constraint is introduced to the process, which guides students to evaluate their ideas and choose an appropriate one to fulfill the goal.

## 4.2. Creative pedagogy

Creative pedagogy is not an independent method that contradicts other teaching approaches. Instead, creativity can be incorporated into a range of methods, such as task-based language teaching and communicative language teaching. Tin (2022: 180) expresses this in the following words: "Creative language pedagogy is an approach not to replace but to repower any teaching approach".

The framework for creative pedagogy is a combination of three linked elements: creative teaching, teaching for creativity, and creative learning (Lin 2011; Tin 2022). This means that creative pedagogy is not just about teachers trying to teach using creative methods, but also allowing students to practice their creativity and problem-solving. Creative teaching means that the teacher is actively using new methods to make learning engaging and motivating. This can include trying different teaching methods and tasks, such as collaborative learning, task-based learning, and using digital environments, for instance. Meanwhile, teaching for creativity recognizes the creative abilities of the students themselves, encouraging and allowing them to be active and imaginative learners. In creative learning, students learn in autonomous and spontaneous ways by questioning, experimenting, playing, and collaborating with others. This is the opposite of the "traditional" manner of learning, where students learn by listening

to a teacher or reading a book (Lin 2011: 151-52). These three elements are naturally intertwined: if the teacher uses creative, interesting teaching methods, this will motivate the students to become active and more creative themselves. If the students are participating and motivated, this should lead to learning.

Certain aspects can damage the learning process and diminish student creativity. According to Lin (2011: 153), the educator should always follow these three suggestions: standing back, giving students choices, and giving them enough time to enhance their ideas. Standing back means that the teacher should take a role of a facilitator, instead of one of authority. It is important that the teacher gives students space and autonomy for creativity and provides feedback in a constructive, but never in a limiting or judgmental way (Kaufman 2016: 258). In addition, students should be given a certain level of freedom when completing the task: it is especially important to diminish the idea that there is only one right answer for the existing problem, as this is very damaging to student creativity. Finally, strict time limits are also challenging for creative pedagogy, as students should have enough time to think of different solutions and discuss them with others (Kaufman 2016: 259).

These three factors are connected to the problem of assessment, which is often an obligatory part of education. Beghetto (2005: 257) argues that to enhance creativity, the classroom environment and the student assessment should follow the *mastery goal structure* instead of the *performance goal structure.* These terms originate from motivational research, and they describe the classroom structure created by the teacher. The performance goal structure concentrates on student comparison, where students are ranked and graded, and mistakes should be avoided. Assessment in this environment can cause students stress and anxiety, which damages student engagement and can make them avoid participation (Kaufman 2016: 259). In contrast, the mastery goal structure focuses on "self-improvement, skills development, creativity, an understanding" (Beghetto 2005: 258). Instead of comparing students to each other, assessment in this structure gives feedback on their progress. These students are more likely

to take part and are motivated to learn – and this is crucial for creativity. As a result, Beghetto (2005: 259-62) makes the following suggestions for assessment that enhance creative pedagogy: first, the teacher should avoid student comparison and overly focusing on grades or scores. Next, assessment should focus on student improvement while providing meaningful feedback on their progress. Finally, the teacher should create a safe classroom environment where creativity is accepted and welcomed with a sense of playfulness.

Some empirical studies showcase how creative pedagogy can increase student motivation and participation in the language classroom (Liao et al. 2018: 219). These positive attributes are also linked with better language performance: allowing students to use language in an autonomous and meaningful way can improve their language skills. There is also evidence of how creative pedagogy can improve students' critical thinking skills (Liao et al. 2018: 220). In the material package, the principles of creative pedagogy will be used to encourage student motivation and creativity in various tasks concerning reading and literature.

# 4 LITERATURE IN THE CURRENT EFL TEXTBOOKS: AN ANALYSIS

In Finland, textbooks have a major role in EFL teaching (Luukka et al. 2008: 64): they follow the National Core Curriculum (NCC) set by the Finnish National Board of Education (Opetushallitus 2016) and often work as the base for the teacher to plan their lessons. For this material package, I wanted to investigate the amount of literature, and the role it has in these books. However, what comes to the current EFL textbooks following the 2016 National Curriculum, there are not any recent studies discussing these questions. I will therefore investigate these current Finnish EFL textbooks published by the two main publishers, SanomaPro and Otava, concentrating on the books for 9th graders who are the target group of this material package. Both SanomaPro and Otava have two EFL book series that are currently available for lower secondary schools. SanomaPro has *Spotlight* (Haapala et al. 2011) and *On the Go* (Daffue-Karsten et al. 2018). Otava also offers two series called *Top* (Blom et al. 2013) and *Scene* (Hiitti et al. 2019). Each series has a textbook and a separate workbook that are divided into learning units, and each unit has its overarching theme. The learning units include multiple texts that have vocabularies and exercises related to them.

I decided to examine all these series to get a clear perspective on how literature has been utilized in EFL: I will investigate how much literature – as defined previously – is in the textbooks and what kind of exercises can be found related to it. Additionally,

I will discuss how the topic of reading and literature is otherwise present in these books. The names of the books are abbreviated in the following way: series name, then textbook is shortened to TB, and workbook to WB. For example: *Spotlight: 9, Fact and fiction: textbook* becomes *Spotlight 9 TB.*

The *Spotlight: 9, Fact and fiction: textbook* (Haapala et al. 2011) includes English literary texts in a part called "Read more" which can be found at the end of each learning unit. The textbook explains that the goal of these texts is to "read and check, how well you understand texts meant for native English speakers" (*Spotlight 9 TB* 2011: 3). The chosen texts are two to three pages long narrative texts, and most of them include dialogue. Some of the words deemed new or challenging for the students are underlined and have Finnish translations next to them. This seems to be a common practice in EFL textbooks when it comes to literature. It is also interesting that literature is separated from the other texts in the book, as it is always under the label "Read more" and is also the last text in each learning unit. I would argue that this makes the text more likely to be skipped by the teacher, as it may seem like additional content that is not a priority.

The *Spotlight: 9, Fact and fiction: workboo*k (Haapala et al. 2012) has exercises related to these "Read more" texts that mostly focus on language and reading comprehension. This includes exercise types such as multiple choice questions, translating sentences, answering open questions, and true or false questions. There are also some writing tasks related to the texts, for example: "Write down your opinion on the following questions" and "Write a dialogue that happens after the story" (*Spotlight 9 WB* 2012: 119). I would argue that these writing tasks are more successful than language-based tasks in using literature as a learning material and taking advantage of its creative qualities. They allow self-reflection, as the questions start with the text and then move to real-life questions, sometimes allowing students to be creative themselves. Additionally, art and culture are the main themes of one of the learning units in *Spotlight 9.* This means that the workbook has a theme vocabulary related to books, literature, and drama, including words such as *short story, poem*, and *novel* (*Spotlight 9 WB* 2012: 192).

What comes to *On the Go 3* (Daffue-Karsten et al. 2018), the textbook includes exactly one text that can be considered authentic literature. This is a one-page long extract from the novel *Mister Pip* by Lloyd Jones that connects to the theme of the learning unit (*On the Go 3 TB* 2018: 169). In the workbook, there are vocabulary tasks related to this text, such as a crossword puzzle and filling the gaps. In this context, the literary text works as a source for learning vocabulary and language structures, but the story itself is not discussed in the exercises. Literature is somewhat present in the books on two other occasions: the workbook has a research task on the author Charles Dickens (*On the Go 3 WB* 2018: 268-69), but no examples of his writing. There is also an audio and comic book retelling of Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days* in the textbook, but there are no tasks related to the story (*On the Go 3 TB* 2018: 60-62).

Unlike the other EFL textbook series discussed in this chapter, *On the Go 3* does not have a specific learning unit on culture, nor a theme vocabulary on literature and reading. I found it interesting that the book has labels for different task types such as START, STUDY, TALK, LISTEN, and PRONUNCIATION, but does not include reading as one of them. The textbook does include some other samples of narrative texts, such as fables and stories, but these are not authentic texts written for native English speakers, but texts modified for the target group.

The *Top: 9, Texts* (Blom et al. 2013) offers literature in the form of three narrative short stories that are related to the theme of their corresponsive learning unit. The stories are approximately two pages long and include dialogue between the characters. Similar to *Spotlight 9,* these texts are located at the end of each unit and also have some of the more challenging vocabulary underlined and translated into Finnish. As discussed before, the placement of these texts at the end of a unit already makes them seem less relevant and can cause them to be skipped. An additional problem with *Top 9* is that there are no exercises connected to the short stories, making them even more likely to be ignored as the teacher would have to make the tasks themselves. It seems that in

this case literature is regarded as extra material to be appointed to the more advanced students, but not actively studied or discussed in class.

*Top 9* has one learning unit on culture, which includes a text discussing preferences on films and books. In addition, there is a theme vocabulary on literature in the textbook (*Top 9 TB* 2013: 120), including words such as *book review, poem*, and *encyclopedia*. The workbook has some vocabulary-based tasks related to the theme, but also writing and discussion tasks on reading books. These tasks include questions such as: "How many books do you read in a year?" and "Explain the plot of your favorite book or film" (*Top 9 WB* 2014: 207-208).

In *Scene: 3, Texts* (Hiitti et al. 2019), literature is the main topic of the learning unit called "The World of Words". The texts presented in this unit discuss reading habits and opinions on books, but only one of these texts is actual literature; the short story *Newerwhere* by Neil Gaiman. The story is approximately one page long and has some of its words underlined and translated into Finnish (*Scene 3 TB* 2019: 128). The only other piece of literature in the textbook can be found later in a part called "Extra reading", which has a 10-page long story *The Boy Who Talked with Animals* by Roald Dahl (*Scene 3 TB* 2019: 134). However, there are no exercises related to this text, making it easy to be skipped.

*Scene: 3, Exercises* (Hiitti et al. 2019) has a variety of tasks related to the story by Neil Gaiman: these exercises require students to put the events of a story in order and then tell the story using their own words. There is also a writing task asking students to write a description of one of the characters using their imagination (*Scene 3 EX* 2019: 166-167). There are also multiple tasks related to the topic of reading, such as talking about the best book you have read, finding information on authors, a literature quiz, making a scene or a comic based on a book, and a book presentation (*Scene 3 EX* 2019: 164). In addition, the textbook offers an extensive theme vocabulary on literature (*Scene 3 TB* 2019: 116), and the workbook has exercises on learning these words. The

tasks in question are purely language-based tasks, such as filling the gaps and translating sentences into English.

I would argue that literature and reading are very present as a theme in *Scene 3*. There are interesting and creative tasks related to the topic, and they do not solely concentrate on vocabulary and language. However, there are only two samples of actual literature in the book and only one of them has tasks related to it.

Looking back at the four EFL book series discussed in this chapter, the following conclusions can be made: firstly, literature and reading often appear to be included in the topic of culture. This means that they are discussed alongside other cultural products or hobbies, such as film and music, and often have their own theme vocabulary. Secondly, there are very few authentic literary texts in these textbooks, and they are often in a secondary role. Literary texts are either situated at the very end of a learning unit or are considered additional reading material. Finally, there is a serious lack of tasks related to literary texts. In some cases, literature is included, but it has no tasks at all. This strengthens the impression that literature is regarded as less important than other texts in these book series The exercises that are present, regularly concentrate on structural elements, especially vocabulary, instead of focusing on the imaginative, reflective, and thought-provoking aspects of literature.

In contrast to these EFL textbooks, this material package aims to use literature as a source for group discussions, self-reflection, and creative projects. There is more concentration on reading for enjoyment, instead of using literature to learn vocabulary and structural elements.

# 5    ABOUT THE MATERIAL PACKAGE

This chapter introduces the material package and discusses its application in practice. I will discuss the aims of the material package and how it considers the learning objectives stated in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014. In addition, the target group, the chosen reading materials and activity types will be explained.

## 5.1    The aims of the material package

The first aim of this material package is to promote reading and literature for Finnish ninth graders. This is realized by choosing exciting short stories that students will hopefully find interesting, and therefore realize that reading can be an enjoyable experience. It is also an opportunity for students to experience and practice reading longer, authentic narrative texts in a safe environment.

The second aim of the material package is to utilize the imaginative and thought-provoking qualities of literature. As I have discussed in the chapter "Literature in the EFL textbooks", literature is often used in a monotonous way to teach vocabulary or structural language elements. In this material package, I have included a variety of different collaborative and creative tasks that practice a variety of language skills.

The final aim is to introduce the topic of literary analysis and interpretation for the students in a low-stakes environment. This includes discussing literature with others, practicing critical thinking skills, and learning basic terminology concerning literature. This targets specifically students moving towards upper secondary school, where these skills are relevant.

## 5.2   The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education

The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education sets the common learning objectives and content for basic education in Finland (Opetushallitus 2016). The curriculum covers the learning aims for each subject and also sets objectives for transversal competencies.  The application of the NCC is decided by each municipality, school, and individual teacher. In this chapter, I will investigate how literature and reading are present in the NCC and explain how this material package can be applied to the objectives set by the national curriculum.

First, the curriculum states the learning objectives for the subject of English as a foreign language (A-syllabus) in grades 7-9. Literature and the content of the material package are closely connected to the objective of multiliteracy skills. The NCC states that language education should promote these skills by utilizing different types of texts in EFL teaching. In addition, it is mentioned that the interests of the students should be considered when choosing these texts (Opetushallitus 2016: 348). The material package is also relevant for other learning objectives, especially cultural diversity and language awareness. The goal of cultural diversity is to encourage students to develop intercultural competence and to find interesting content in English, which is strongly present in the material package. In language awareness, the aim is to help students to find different ways for studying the language and to encourage lifelong learning: in the material package, this is realized by encouraging active reading. In addition, tasks in the material package promote the objectives of overall language

proficiency and include activities that practice interaction skills, text interpretation, and text production (Opetushallitus 2016: 349)

Secondly, the material package can be applied to several of the transversal competencies for grades 7-9. In the competence "Thinking and learning to learn (T1)", it says that "It is important to learn to listen to oneself and others, to perceive things through other people's eyes, and to find alternatives and creative solutions" (Opetushallitus 2016: 281). It is also expressed that students should have opportunities for critical thinking and to use their imagination for creating new ideas. This is one of the main principles of the material package, as creative and critical thinking and group discussion are strongly present in the activities. The second transversal competence of cultural competence, interaction, and self-expression (T2) is also relevant. It is stated that students should "have opportunities for experiencing and interpreting art, culture, and cultural heritage" (Opetushallitus 2016: 282). Again, this competence appears regularly in the material package as students discuss and analyze literature. The competence of multiliteracy skills (T4) is the third important learning objective related to the material package, as it includes skills related to literature. To enhance multiliteracy, students should be introduced to many different text types and learn how to "produce, interpret, and communicate information" (Opetushallitus 2016: 284).

The final relevant application for the material package concerns multidisciplinary teaching. The NCC states that English can be integrated into other subjects and to teach multidisciplinary modules (Opetushallitus 2016: 348). The material package could be utilized in a cooperative class between the EFL teacher and the teacher of Finnish and literature, for example.

## 5.3   The target group

The target group of the material package is the ninth graders in the Finnish lower secondary school. The age of these students is usually 15-16 years, and most of them

have English as their A language, meaning that they started their English studies in first grade. The ninth grade is the final grade of lower secondary education before students continue to upper secondary school or vocational schools. This material package targets especially those students moving towards upper secondary school, where studying literature and reading books in English are often required. Choosing this target group originated from my own experience teaching English in a large upper secondary school, during which I noticed how little experience students had with reading and discussing literature. Many students expressed never having read literature in English before and struggled to understand tasks related to the topic. The examination of the current EFL textbooks and also the studies conducted on the topic (Luukka et al. 2008; Luukka 2017) revealed some reasons for this issue. As a result, I felt that this material package would be the most beneficial for ninth graders, as it works as a needed introduction to the topic of reading and literary analysis.

## 5.4 The short stories

This material package is based on three scary short stories. The stories were chosen using a combination of the student-, teacher-, and language-driven approaches (Luukka 2017). A completely student-driven approach (students choose the texts themselves) was abandoned, as it would be difficult to plan cohesive lessons with each student reading different literature. However, the genre was chosen based on the interests of the students: in the study by Luukka (2017), the Finnish 16-18-year-olds mostly read narrative texts and preferred fantasy, horror, and sci-fi over other genres. To consider these preferences and to increase student motivation, the genre of narrative horror short stories was chosen. As horror can be a divisive genre and often includes mature themes, the choice was toned down to "scary" or "spooky" stories that are suitable for the target group.

Short stories were chosen as they are not too intimidating in length for students nor take too much time to read. The length also allows using multiple stories, which

hopefully will be more engaging for students than only working with one story or book. It was also important to consider the language, as the target group is ninth graders between the ages of 15-16. The language should not be too difficult for them to encourage participation and reading for enjoyment. However, due to the nature and approach of the material package, I would argue that the language of the stories is in a secondary role, as there is no need to understand every word of the text to complete the tasks. In most of the activities, the short stories work as a topic of discussion or as inspirational material, and not as a text that has to be studied word by word.

The first short story is **Click Clack The Rattle Bag** by Neil Gaiman (2012). The story is only two pages long and includes descriptions and dialogue between two characters. One of the characters works as a first-person narrator, and the story is written in simple, modern English. The story was chosen as it is very easy to read, making it a good first step for the students. The topic of the story is also interesting, as it evokes imagination and can be related to the reader's childhood, for example. Neil Gaiman has also many other suitable books and stories for young readers.

The second short story, **The Wife's Story** by Ursula K. Le Guin (1982), was chosen for its thought-provoking and surprising narrative. The story is three pages long, and only includes first-person narration and no dialogue, making it different from the other two stories. The story has an interesting twist and interpretational elements that can be used for class discussions. The language is straightforward but includes more challenging vocabulary than the previous story.

**The Landlady** by Roald Dahl (1959) is the final short story in this material package. The story is eight pages long, requiring more concentration from the students. It has a third-person narrator and includes both description and dialogue between two characters. The language is more detailed and includes place names and cultural elements, and the story itself is very suspenseful and open to interpretation. The story was

chosen as it works as engaging material for practicing literary analysis and creative writing.

The three stories are available online and can be used for teaching purposes due to the copying license obtained by the Finnish National Agency for Education. The license allows using literary works in teaching and making printouts for students (*Kopioston kopiontilupa* 2014). The visual elements of the material package are licensed under Creative Commons and are thus permitted for non-commercial use.

## 5.5 The tasks

The material package has six 75-minute lessons based on the three short stories discussed previously. During the first lesson, students will reflect on the role that reading and literature have in their lives. They will read the first short story and use it as an inspiration to discuss the topic of fear. The second and third lessons concentrate on the genres of fantasy and horror, as students will read and discuss the second short story. The third short story is the focus of the three final lessons: students will read the story, discuss it in detail utilizing the literature circle technique, and then write their continuation to the said story.

The material package follows the principles of creative pedagogy and aims to enhance student creativity and participation. Therefore, the teacher should follow these suggestions while teaching the lessons (Beghetto 2005; Lin 2011; Kaufman 2016):

1) Step back taking a role of a facilitator.
2) Be open and encouraging of students' ideas.
3) Give enough time for the creative process.
4) Have a sense of playfulness.

These ideas are reflected in the tasks that allow students to brainstorm, make decisions, collaborate with others, and have fun. In most of the tasks, the teacher acts as a facilitator, but there are also some teacher-led activities to help with time and classroom

management, as well as to ensure the comprehension of some key concepts related to literature.

Finally, I will introduce the concept of the literature circle technique which has the main role in class four. Literature circles are student-led discussion groups where each member reads the same literary text. To guide the students in the reading process, each of them is appointed a role that gives them a specific task. In the end, the students come together to share their findings and discuss their opinion on the text (Daniels 2002: 2).

The possible roles according to Daniels (2002) are:
- Discussion leader: leads the discussion and invites others to participate.
- Summarizer: gives an oral summary of the text.
- Word master: chooses new or important words to share.
- Passage person: chooses key passages to be read aloud.
- Connector: makes connections to real-life people and events.
- Cultural collector: looks for cultural elements and compares them to own culture.
- Artistic adventurer: makes a creation based on a story.

The literature circle in the material package includes three of these roles: summarizer, word master, and cultural collector, and adds a role of a character expert. Limiting the number of roles and thus having students in smaller groups is due to time restrictions and classroom management. The four roles were chosen to aid the overall comprehension of the story, and also to give each student close to an equal amount of work.

# 6   CONCLUSION

The objective of this material package is to introduce reading literature for 9th graders in Finnish lower secondary education: the focus is on promoting reading for enjoyment by utilizing the principles of creative pedagogy. The benefits of using literature in the foreign language classroom have been well documented: literature provides students with authentic reading material that they can connect with. Students will gain cultural and historical knowledge while making their interpretations of literary texts, which allows them to not only develop their language skills but also practice critical and creative thinking. Using literature and reading in EFL education is however not without its challenges, as teachers may struggle with choosing suitable texts, time management, and student engagement.

Good reading skills correlate with better academic success and socio-economic status. Reading skills include many types of cognitive, social, and cultural skills that vary depending on the text type and purpose of reading. Reading is also ever-changing, and in recent years, the focus has been on multiliteracy skills and multimodal text types. In Finland, people overall read fewer books and literature than before, and there is a growing gap between good and poor readers. Reading has decreased the most among young people, which is a concern for many educators.

The thesis includes an analysis of Finnish EFL textbooks which revealed that literature has little presence in these materials. More often than not, literature was put in a

secondary role and regarded as less important than other texts. The number of activities related to the literary texts was also sparse, and most of the tasks found in the textbooks focused on intensive reading and structural language elements. Reading for enjoyment, or using literature as a source for discussion, problem-solving, or imagination, barely existed.

In contrast to the EFL textbooks, this material package has a different approach to literature and offers an alternative for teachers who wish to bring literature and reading into their classroom. It includes six lessons with a variety of tasks centered around three scary short stories. Instead of carefully reading through the texts and fixating on vocabulary and grammar, students will engage in extensive reading, which aims for general comprehension and increased student motivation. The learning tasks follow the principles of creative pedagogy and encourage students to think independently, discuss with others, and use their imagination in productive activities. The teacher has the role of facilitator, who guides students in their learning while maintaining a playful and encouraging atmosphere.

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**Spooky stories for EFL education - a chilling material package**

**TO THE TEACHER:**

**What's the material package about?**

This material package uses spooky short stories as a resource for various language-learning tasks. The aim is to promote literature and reading for enjoyment and to encourage students to become active readers themselves. The activities allow students to practice reading literature in English in a safe environment. Students will also learn how to discuss and analyze literary texts and they will use them as inspiration for their own productive tasks.

**For whom is it meant?**

The material package is designed for ninth graders in lower secondary school. The three short stories chosen for reading have been chosen specifically for this target group. However, as the stories include some horror and fantasy elements, the teacher should read the texts carefully and make their own judgment on the suitability.

**What are the lessons like?**

The material package includes six lessons, each scheduled to be 75 minutes. The short stories are read during the class, although re-reading them at home is encouraged. Each lesson has tasks related to the text itself, but also tasks related to the theme or subject of each story. In the two final lessons, students will realize a productive task to practice their writing and speaking skills. Teacher feedback should be given on this task, but formal assessment is not required.

The lessons are based on creative pedagogy, which means that it aims to promote both teacher and student creativity by using motivating activities and encouraging problem-solving. Collaboration and brainstorming have an important role in this. The teacher should allow students to make decisions and be open to their ideas while taking the role of a facilitator.

**How to use the material package?**

Each lesson has instructions for the teacher (blue background), including the theme and learning objectives. The suggested timing and required materials are also mentioned. After this, there are separate materials that should be shared with the students, such as presentations and printed handouts.

**LESSON 1 – to the teacher**

Topics:
- Introduction to the theme of literature and reading.
- Listening to and reading the first short story: *Click clack the rattle bag* by Neil Gaiman.
- Common fears.

Objectives:
- Students reflect on the role of reading in their life.
- Students use vocabulary related to literature and talk about books and reading using their own words.
- Students discuss the chosen story and its message.
- Students discuss the topic of common fears.

**Task 1: Literary interviews - 10 minutes**

Students get in two lines facing each other. A discussion question is given on a screen or orally by the teacher, and students then have a short time to talk about the question with the person they are facing. After one or two minutes, one line will move, and now each student gets a new partner and a new question. The task ends when everybody has talked with everybody, or when all the questions have been discussed.

Questions:
- How many books have you read in your life?
- Did you have a favorite book as a kid?
- What is your favorite book of all time, and why do you love it?
- Who is your favorite author, and what is your favorite book by them?
- What is the worst book you have read?
- Are you reading something right now? If not, what is the last book you've read?
- Do you like to read a real book or listen to an audiobook? Why?
- Do you know any TV shows or films that are based on books?
- What kind of literature do you enjoy reading the most (mystery, romance, sci-fi, fantasy, horror…)?
- Do you have a favorite character who appears in a book? Who is it and why do you like them?
- Have you read books or stories in English?
- What do you think about reading books? Is it important/boring/fun…?
- Do you like reading scary stories?

**Task 2: Story time – 10 minutes**

Provide each student with a copy of *Click clack the rattle bag* by Neil Gaiman.
Ask students to read the story aloud in pairs or groups. Walk around the classroom, listen to the students and help them with pronunciation or comprehension if needed.

**Task 3: Brainstorming – 40 minutes**

Divide the students into pairs or small groups. Give them a worksheet with questions about the story. Ask students to discuss the questions on the worksheet. Walk around the class and ask students to express their opinions, and help them to stay on the task. Also, ask what they thought about the story and if there were parts they did not understand.

Questions:
1) Explain what happened in the story.
2) What characters were there? How would you describe them?
3) What is the boy scared of?
4) Can you relate to the feelings of the story? (relate to = samaistua)
5) What do you think is the theme of the story?
6) What could happen next in the story?

The answers to the last two questions should be written on the worksheet:
7) Write down three words that describe the story in your opinion. Use a dictionary if needed.
8) Make a list of common fears (= things that many people are afraid of). For example: the dark

There is also an additional task for those who finish quickly: Who is Neil Gaiman?
At the end of the task, collect the worksheets from the students.

**Task 4: Debrief – 15 minutes**

Go through some of the questions by asking each pair or group to share their thoughts. Go also through some of the written answers and ask what the descriptive words are in Finnish. You can also pick some of the fears and ask students if they share this fear. For example: "Raise your hand if you are afraid of the dark". At the end of the class, you can share something you are afraid of. If the students had time to research Neil Gaiman, ask one group to share their findings.

**LESSON 1 – presentation slides**



Lesson 1: task 1

## LITERARY INTERVIEWS I

1) How many books have you read in your life?
2) Did you have a favorite book as a kid?
3) What is your favorite book of all time, and why do you love it?
4) Who is your favorite author, and what is your favorite book by them?
5) What is the worst book you have read?
6) Are you reading something right now? If not, what is the last book you've read?
7) Do you like to read a real book or listen to an audio book? Why?



Lesson 1: task 1

## LITERARY INTERVIEWS II

1) Do you know any TV shows or films that are based on books?
2) What kind of literature do you enjoy reading the most (mystery, romance, sci-fi, fantasy, horror…)?
3) Do you have a favorite character who appears in a book? Who is it and why do you like them?
4) Have you read books or stories in English?
5) What do you think about reading books? Is it important/boring/fun…?
6) Do you like reading scary stories?

**LESSON 1 - task 3 - student worksheet**

Read the story *Click Clack the Rattle Bag* by Neil Gaiman.

**DISCUSS** the following questions with your partner:

1) Explain what happened in the story.
2) What characters were there? How would you describe them?
3) What is the boy scared of?
4) What do you think is the theme of the story?
5) What could happen next in the story?

**WRITE** down your answers to these questions:

6) Write down at least **three (3)** words that describe the story in your opinion. Use a dictionary if needed.

7) Make a list of common fears (= things that many people are afraid of). For example: the dark. Write at least **five (5)** things.

**FIND OUT** who Neil Gaiman is. What books has he written?
Do you know any of them? Are there any films or TV series based on his work?

**LESSON 2 – to the teacher**

Topics:
- Reading and discussing the second short story: *The Wife's Story* by Ursula K. Le Guin.
- Discussing and researching fantasy and horror creatures.

Objectives:
- Students read a short story at their own pace. They talk about how a story can have different interpretations.
- Students learn vocabulary related to famous fantasy and horror creatures of literature.
- Students research one of these creatures and their origins and write a short presentation of it.

**Task 1: Quiet reading – 15 minutes**

Provide students with the printed-out version of the story *The Wife's Story* by Ursula K. Le Guin. Explain to them that they can read the story at their own pace and then move to the discussion tasks with their partner. Divide the students into pairs and then ask them to read the story quietly by themselves. The students can get comfortable in the classroom for their reading time.

**Task 2: Discussion in pairs – 10 minutes**

Questions for the students:
- How would you describe the story?
- Who were the main characters of the story and what happened to them? Do you all agree?
- Were you surprised by the story?
- Do you know what a "plot twist" means? Find out and explain it to your partner.
- Do you know any books or films that have a plot twist?

When the students finish with their discussion, ask them to find another pair and discuss the story with them. Listen to the conversation and ask students to explain their perspectives. Make note of whether there are different interpretations in the classroom so that you can discuss them later together.

**Task 3: Debriefing together – 10 minutes**

Ask one of the pairs to express what they think happened in the story. Then ask if there are any other interpretations. Ensure that the concept of a plot twist is understood by everyone. You can also ask students' overall opinion on the story, whether they liked or disliked it.

It is likely that at this point students will answer that the characters are wolves or werewolves. Ask them why they think that and go through some of the evidence together. You can also ask what other media they know that has werewolves.

**Task 4: Creature quiz – 10 minutes**

Play a Quiz on fantasy and horror creatures. The winner can get a small prize, for example, a piece of candy. The Quiz is available on Quizizz to do on mobile and is also included as a worksheet.

Link to the quiz:
https://quizizz.com/admin/quiz/642eca6e999474001d4ec578?source=quiz_share.

Worksheet answer key:
| | |
|---|---|
| 1) B | 6) B |
| 2) D | 7) A |
| 3) Dragons | 8) B |
| 4) A | 9) Zombies |
| 5) D | 10) C |
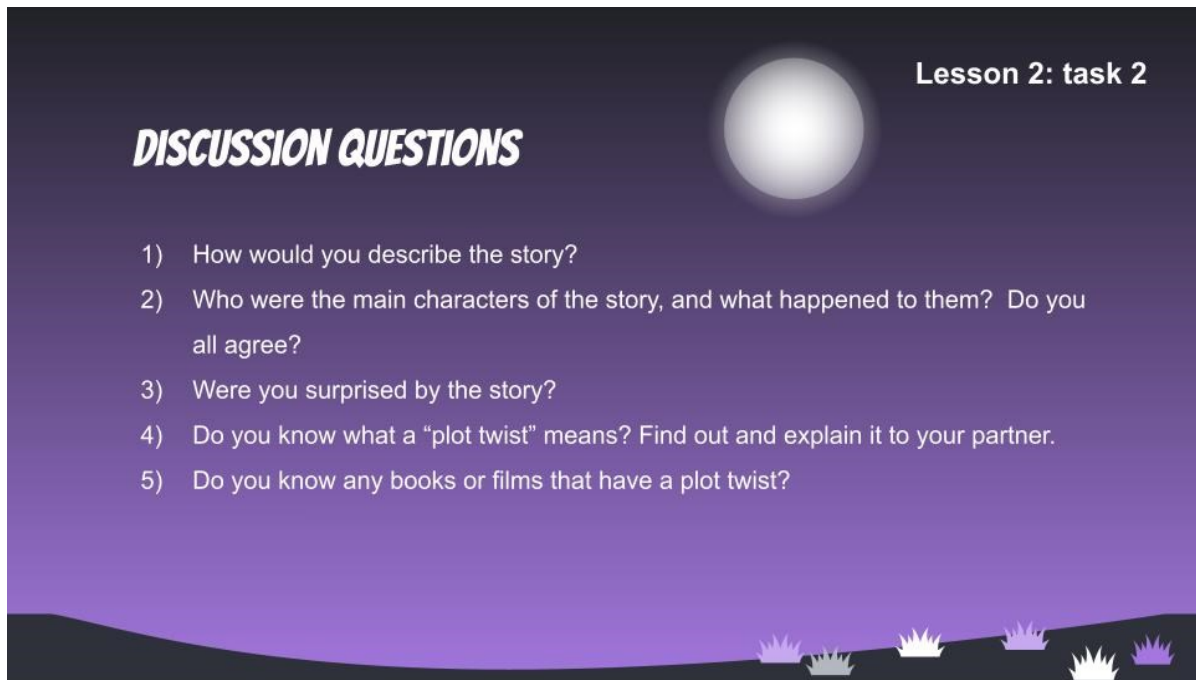
**Task 5: Creaturesearch - research task on fantasy and horror creatures – 30 minutes**

In pairs, ask students to research a creature of their choice and write a short text about it. They can consider the following questions:

- What is the origin of the creature?
- How would you describe it?
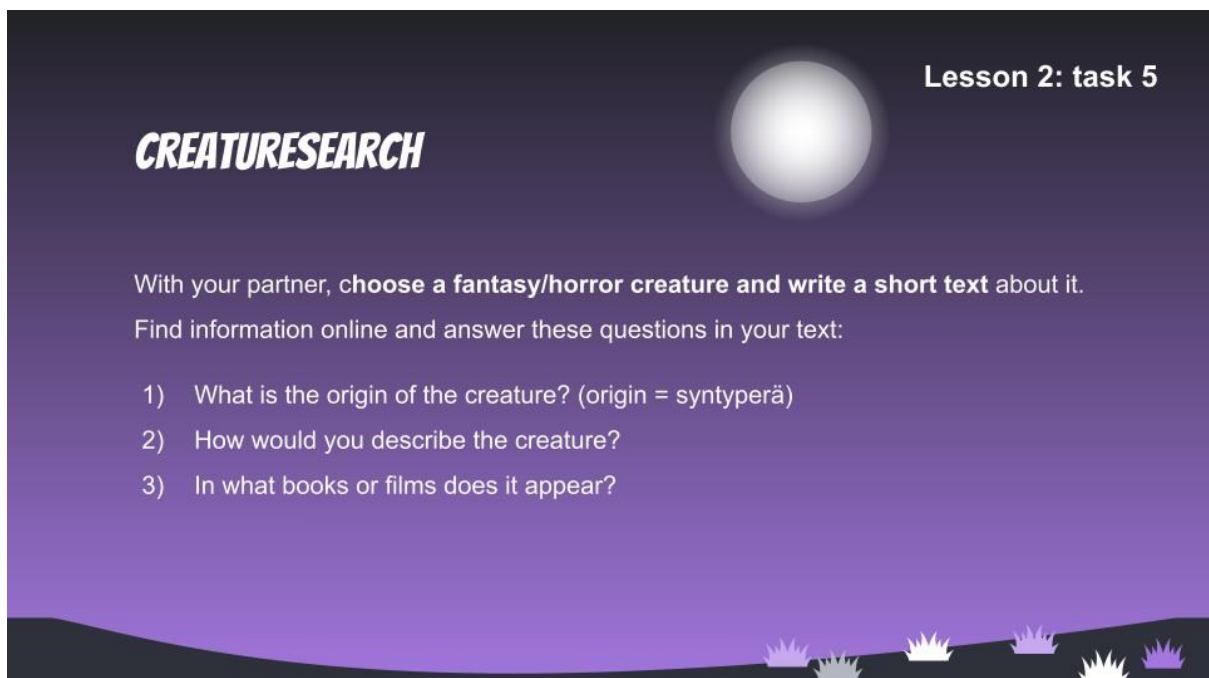- In what books or films does it appear?

If there's time left, ask students to introduce their creatures to others.

**LESSON 2 – presentation slides**

**LESSON 2 – task 4 - creature quiz worksheet**



**Quizizz**

Creature quizz
10 Questions

NAME : _____

CLASS : _____

DATE : _____

1. What are vampires NOT scared off?

| A | Garlic | B | Bats |
|---|--------|---|------|
| C | Holy water | D | Sunlight |

2. A beast that is half-lion and half-eagle is called:

| A | Manticore | B | Hippogriff |
|---|-----------|---|------------|
| C | Centaur | D | Griffin |

3. Smaug, Norberta, and Viserion are famous _____.

4. Which creature is a giant with one eye?

| A | Cyclops | B | Troll |
|---|---------|---|-------|
| C | Orc | D | Bigfoot |

5. Which creature lives on land?

| A | Siren | B | Kraken |
|---|-------|---|--------|
| C | Mermaid | D | Pixie |

?

6.  Which sentence is FALSE?

A. The phoenix is a bird made of fire.

B. The Pegasus is from Nordic mythology.

C. The Loch Ness Monster has never been seen.

D. Unicorns have magical healing powers.

7.  A small, magical human creature with wings is called:

A. Fairy

B. Elf

C. Goblin

D. Medusa

8.  The spfinx is known for...

A. giving advice.

B. asking riddles.

C. helping the lost ones.

D. tricking people.

9.  The undead, the living dead, and the walking dead are names for _____.

10.  Which creature is half-man, half-bull?

A. Centaur

B. Sphinx

C. Minotaur

D. Werewolf

## LESSON 3 – to the teacher

Topics:
- Designing their own fantasy or horror creature.
- Making a poster about the creature and presenting it to other students.

Objectives:
- Students get to think creatively and design their own creatures.
- Students create a spoken presentation of their creature and will also listen to the presentations by others.

### Task 1: Creature con: workshop – 45 minutes

Get the students in pairs or small groups. Provide them with art supplies and large papers and ask them to design and draw their own fantasy or horror creatures. Ask them to give it a name and they can also add some descriptions or abilities on the poster, such as: "can see in the dark" or "has four wings".

Some questions for the students to consider:
- What is the creature called?
- Where does it live?
- What does it eat?
- What are its special abilities?
- Is it dangerous/friendly to humans?

### Task 2: Creature con: presentations – 30 minutes

Ask each pair or group to present their creature to the rest of the class. If there is not enough time for that, you can split the class into half or form groups and have multiple presentations going at the same time. You can also have a vote on the coolest creature at the end of the class. The final posters can be displayed in the classroom.

### Homework:

Give students the final short story: *The Landlady* by Roald Dahl. Ask them to read it for the next class. You can also give them a link to an audio version on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-C4rot133os

**LESSON 3 – presentation slides**

## LESSON 4 – to the teacher

Topics:
- Introducing the reading circle technique
- Reading and discussing the short story: *The Landlady* by Roald Dahl.
- Beginning to work on a creative writing assignment.

Objectives:
- Students learn the basics of a reading circle technique.
- Students learn and get to use vocabulary related to literary analysis.
- Students get to practice creative writing.

**Task 1: Literature circle with roles: part 1 – 30 minutes**

Divide students into groups of four. Each student in the group will be given one of the following roles: *summarizer, word master, culture collector, and character expert.* Students will then have around 45 minutes to read the short story again and complete their individual tasks.

Instructions for each role:

*Summarizer:* Read the story again and prepare a summary of it. A summary should explain the most important events of the story. Later you will have to explain your summary to your group.

*Character expert:* Read the story again and concentrate on the characters. What characters are there? What do they do in the story? How would you describe them? Do you like/dislike them?

*Word master:* Read the story again and choose 10 words that you want to know the meaning of. Find out what the words mean and how they translate to Finnish. Prepare to teach the words to your group.

*Culture collector:* Read the story again and concentrate on the cultural elements. Try to answer the following questions: Where is the story located? In what time period are we? Prepare to share your findings with the group.

**Task 2: Literature circle with roles: part 2 – 45 minutes**

When the group is finished with the individual tasks, they will form a circle and go through each task together. Each member will report their findings, and the rest of the group will write the answer down on the worksheet.

If the students finish the assignment early, they can start brainstorming how the story could be continued.

**Homework:**

Inform students that the next class will be used for a writing assignment related to the story. Ask them to read it once more at home for preparation.

**LESSON 4 – task 1 - literature circle roles**

**ROLE A: SUMMARIZER**

Read the story *The Landlady* by Roald Dahl and write a **summary** of it. A summary is a short explanation of what happens in the story.

Write your answer on the worksheet and prepare to explain your summary to your group**.**

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**ROLE B: CHARACTER EXPERT**

Read the story *The Landlady* by Roald Dahl and concentrate on **the characters.** Try to answer the following questions:
- What characters are there, and what do they do in the story?
- How would you describe the characters? Do you like/dislike them?

Write your answers on the worksheet and prepare to share them with your group.

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**ROLE C: WORD MASTER**

Read the story *The Landlady* by Roald Dahl and choose **at least ten (10) words** that you want to know the meaning of. Find out what the words mean and how they translate to Finnish.

Write your answers on the worksheet and prepare to teach the words to your group.

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**ROLE D: CULTURE COLLECTOR**

Read the story *The Landlady* by Roald Dahl and pay attention to the cultural elements. Try to answer the following questions:
- Where is the story located? How do you know?
- In what time period does the story take place? How do you know?
- How would the story be different if it happened today?
- Find out information about the author Roald Dahl.

Write your answers on the worksheet and prepare to share your answers with the group.

**LESSON 4 – task 2 - literature circle worksheet**

**NAME:** _____

Each group member will explain their role and their answers. Listen to their answers and write them down on this worksheet:

| SUMMARIZER |
|---|
|  |

| CHARACTER EXPERT |
|---|
|  |

**WORD MASTER**

**CULTURE COLLECTOR**

## LESSON 5 – to the teacher

Topic:
- Creative writing task for students

Objectives:
- Students get to brainstorm ideas and use imagination in their own stories.
- Students practice writing narrative texts.

### Task 1: Brainstorming – 15 minutes

Ask students to remember the story *The Landlady* by Roald Dahl. Ask them to brainstorm in pairs or groups about how the story could continue. Possible questions are: What could happen next? What could the characters do or say? What could be a possible sad ending? How about a happy ending?

### Task 2: Writing task – 60 minutes

Give the students instructions for the writing assignment to be returned at the end of the class. This is not a graded assignment, but the teacher should provide feedback. Students will write a continuation to the story *The Landlady* by Roald Dahl. It should include both description and dialogue. Students are allowed to brainstorm with friends, re-read the story, and use online dictionaries. It would be best to write on a computer if they are available.

Writing instructions:

Continue the story *The Landlady* by Roald Dahl. What could happen next? What will the characters do and say? You can re-read the story and use dictionaries. Try to include both dialogue (=speech) and description. Write at least 150 words.

**LESSON 5 – presentation slides**

**LESSON 6 – to the teacher**

Topics:
- Students receive feedback on their writing.
- Students make an audio recording of the story they have written.

Objectives:
- Students get to correct their own writing mistakes and re-write their stories following the given feedback.
- Students practice pronunciation and reading aloud by making an audio version of their stories.

**Task 1: All-around feedback - 10 minutes**

Give the whole class feedback on the story writing: highlight the good parts, but also mention common mistakes. You can also choose two very different stories and read them aloud to the class, for example.

**Task 2: Re-writing – 25 minutes**

Return the stories to students and ask them to re-write them following your corrections and feedback.

**Task 3: Lost audio files – recording task – 25 minutes**

Ask students to make an audiobook version of their story and return it to you by the end of the class. Students can use their own phones for recording or use tablets or other devices available from the school. Consider the easiest way for recording and returning the audio before the lesson, such as which application students should use. It is also advisable to let students utilize the hallway or another classroom when they make their recordings so that everyone has space to work.

**Task 4: The end - short reflection – 10 minutes**

Ask students to reflect on their experience by discussing the following questions with their partner:
- Which one of the three stories was your favorite?
- How was it to read stories in English? What did you like or dislike?
- Did you like the writing task?
- Will you read more in English in the future?

## LESSON 6 – presentation slides