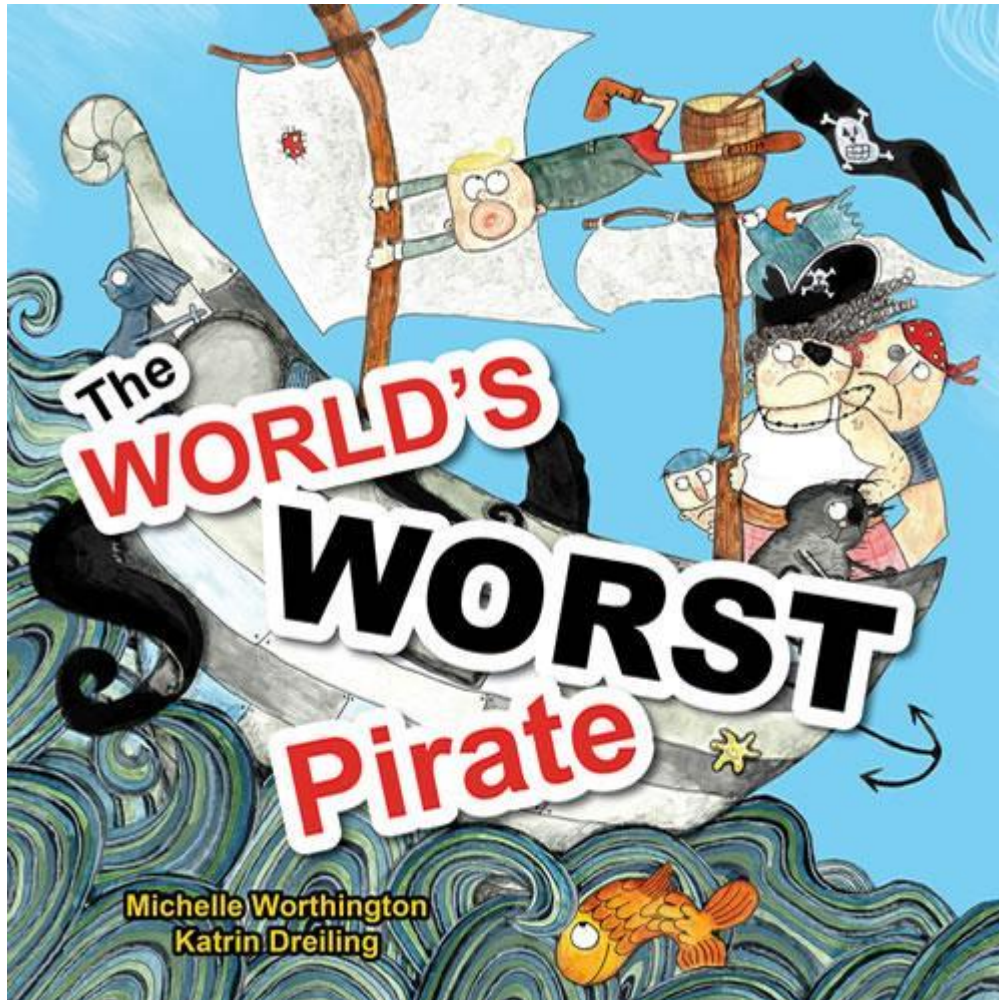The World's Worst Pirate

 by Michelle Worthington and Katrin Dreiling

Mini-unit of teaching activities:

Having children spend time immersed in a story and developing ideas around and beyond the text, allows for rich opportunities that encourage creative thinking, deep questioning and engaging learning experiences.

This series of across curricula lessons, suited to students in Grades 2-4, can be used as stand-alone activities or embraced as a fun 'mini-unit', during which students can set sail in search of imaginative and creative treasure.

English: setting up a word wall to support and develop vocabulary

[Resources: large sheet of paper/cardboard, felt pens and word cards, data projector]

To make sure none of our pirates have to walk the plank because they don't know their rigging from their porthole, a pirate ship word wall will be worth its weight in buried treasure.

On large sheets of paper or cardboard, draw a simple pirate ship or enlarge the picture (Appendix 1) using a data projector and trace the outline. The word wall becomes an easily accessed planning and editing tool.

Place labels for all the important parts of the ship and place other related words on the wooden planks the make up the ship's hull or in the waves.

Now the crew will have all the words they need to write about pirate perils and kraken cupcakes.

(ACELY 1672, ACELY 1683, ACELY 1695)

Drama: reader's theatre, group script writing and performance

[Resources: acting space, dress-up box and simple props, writing equipment]

It is great to spend time getting familiar with a story when it will be the stimulus for a series of activities.

This action packed story would really work as a reader's theatre exercise. Re-read the story with kids taking the main roles and innovating dialogue as they experiment with character traits and point of view. My favourite idea is to have 4 kids [8 legs] play the role of the kraken. Members of the class who don't want main roles can be the pirate crew and make sound effects.

Progressing on from the improvisations, or as an alternative, children could develop and innovate a performance by working in groups, planning and writing a script and perform their play for the class.

(ACADRM031, ACADRM033, ACELY1678, ACELY 1689)

English: exploring character traits and point of view

[Resources: collection of simple dress-up items suitable to pirate theme]

Will and his captain mother did not see eye to eye-patch about him wanting to be a cupcake chef. Have the children use dress up items to help them imagine what Mum and other characters on the ship saw from their point of view and write parts of the story from the way these different characters saw it:

> • Mum – worried about her un-piratey son.

> • The kraken

> • The cat and the bird

> • Will

> • A cranky crew member

(ACELY 1675, ACELY 1678, ACELY 1689)

English: writing persuasive text

[Children's personal experiences about asking for something they want]

Children can imagine themselves in Will's situation and then write a letter to Mum telling her about wanting to leave the ship and brainstorm reasons for going ashore and open a restaurant.

Have children work together to brainstorm all the reasons for leaving the ship and becoming a chef. Have children contribute ideas and real world examples such as Master Chef etc.

Model persuasive letter features and have children write a letter from Will to his Mum asking her if he can leave to seek his fortune.

(ACELT 1601, ACELY 1671, ACELY 1682, ACELY 1694)

English: characterisation

[Resources: model letter from the Kraken]

The kraken is a big focus in this story so kids can really get their ideas brewing by imagining what it is feeling and how it sees things from its watery point of view. Build on the ideas developed through reader's theatre and the point of view exercises to encourage ideas and creative thinking. Use Appendix 2 as a model of a note from the Kraken

Kraken uses his special octopus ink to write and thank you note to Will for giving him the cupcakes and making him happy after his boring life of eating prawns and stinking fish.

(ACELT 1591, ACELY 1675)

English: researching the original Kraken legend

[Resources: library and on line sources of information, locating these sources may be given as a homework task and then shared]

The kraken will hold lots of children's attention. They will be keen to research the origins of this legend and explore related facts.

Research question: what were the origins of the original kraken myth?

Invite the children to explore myths and legends as part of library lessons or guide an on line research quest.

Junior version of the kraken legend, and kid friendly fact files are available online at: www.kidscomefirst.com   www.wiki.kidsearch.com   www.mentalfloss.com

www.mythicalrealm.com   Text: 'The Kraken' by Gary Crew

(ACELY 1678, ACELY 1680, ACELY 1690, ACELY 1692)

Design and Technology: create a home for the Kraken

[Resources: large sheets of paper and drawing equipment]

Have the children use the knowledge from their research of the (alleged) size and shape of the Kraken to generate ideas and design a bed or kennel on or near the pirate ship for the kraken to sleep in. Children label the features of the diagram and present their design to the class, explaining and justifying the features and answering questions about their design.

(ACTDEP 015)

English, procedural writing:

[Children bring their favourite pizza and cupcake recipes from home]

Have the children share their recipes and explore the features of procedure genre by comparing similarities between recipes. Children need to identify the method, equipment and procedure sections of the recipe and discuss the importance of each section and why they are so important.

Now that the children have read the Kraken's note and know that he likes fishy cupcakes they can have some pirate fun by innovating the genre of recipe and invent 'fishy' (much grosser) versions of a cupcake fit for a hungry kraken.

(ACELY 1682, ACELY 169, ACELY 11692)

Art: creating a comic, graphic story or story map

[Resources: simple comic strip grid, children can creature their own title]

Point out the cat and the bird and have the children follow the story between these two characters that has been 'told' in the illustrations.

This hidden story could be acted out and then animated and retold as a comic (Appendix 3), short graphic novelette or story map.

(ACELT 1794, ACELT 1593)

Science, floating and sinking and wind power: [Resources: plasticine, water trough, paper and drinking straws, pictures of ships and boats]

The children can be guided through questioning to hypothesise about how and why ships and boat float and then experiment by modelling with plasticine to make a boat and test to see if it can float.

Once they have made a 'sea-worthy' boat they can add a sail and use wind power (blowing on the sail) to compete in races and explain their theories about how wind make the boat move.

Children can record their guesses record their guesses, testing method and their observations on the work sheet (Appendix 4) and present their finding to the class.

(ACSHE 034, ACSHE 050, ACSHE 061, ACSIS 038, ACSIS 054, ACSIS 065)

Appendix 1:
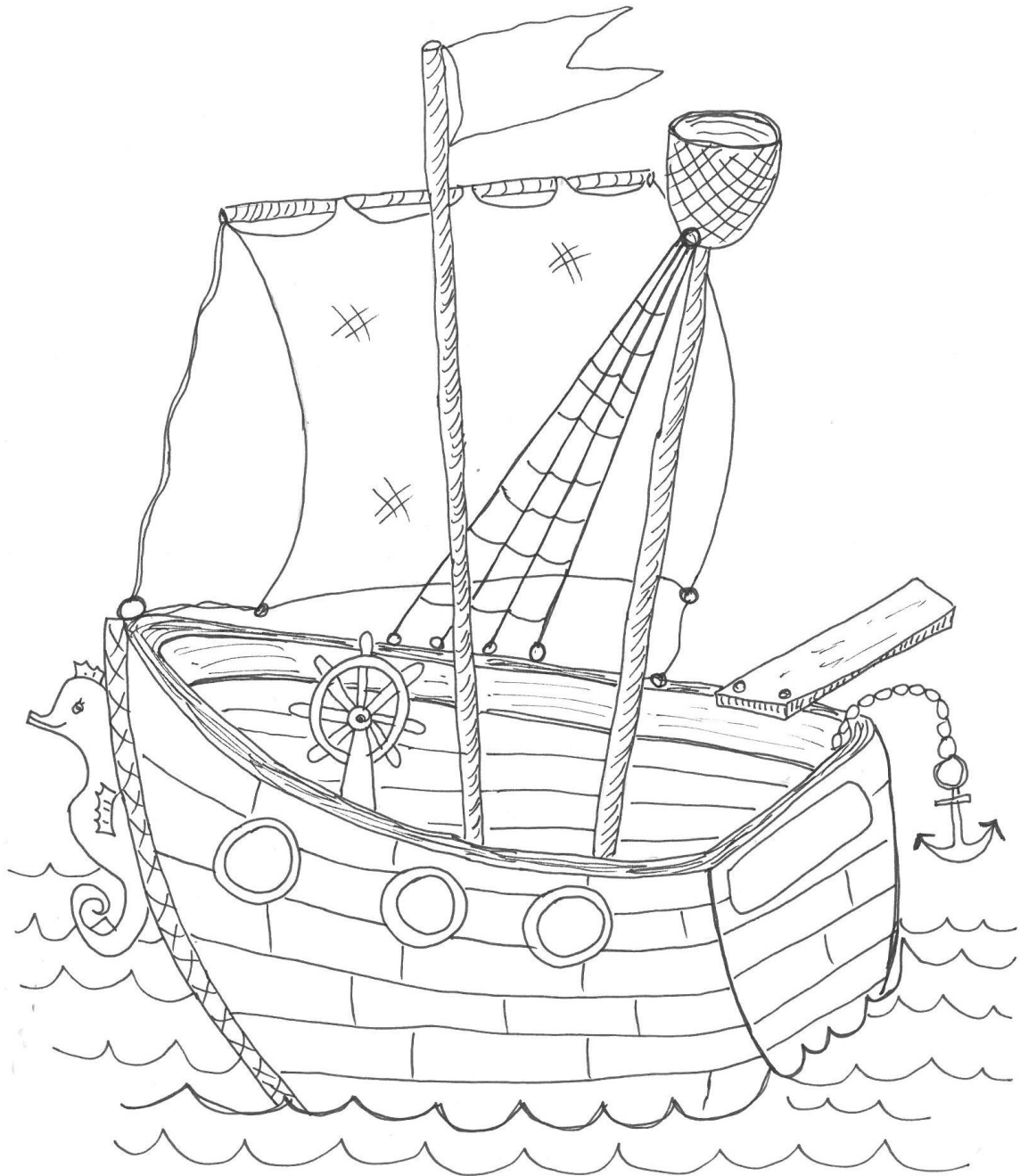
Appendix 2:

Dear Will

Please excuse my wriggly kraken writing it's hard to write with a tentacle. I really wanted to say thank you for being so kind to me.

Your cupcakes are very delicious. I usually only get to eat prawns and fish, and of course crushed up pirate ships but pirates aren't as tasty as your cupcakes and I get nasty pirate ship splinters stuck in between my teeth, OUCH!

I was very lonely at the bottom of the sea. Thank you for being so friendly and helping me to cheer up and not be so cranky all the time.

Your best new friend

Kranky K Kraken

PS – have you ever thought of baking fish flavoured cupcakes?

Appendix 3:

The Perils of Cat and Bird			

Appendix 4:

Will my boat float?	How do we set sail?
What do I **guess** will happen?	What do I **guess** will happen?
How will I **test** my hypothesis?	How will I **test** my hypothesis?
What did I **observe**?	What did I **observe**?
What do I **know** now?	What do I **know** now?