

MAX MAGIC

STEPHEN
MULHERN

with TOM EASTON ♠ illustrated by Begoña Fernández Corbalán



Educational Resource Pack - 4x Lesson Plans and Ideas

Suitable for: Ages 7+

Explore themes of:

- ✓ The wonder of magic: Delve into Max's fascination with magic tricks and illusions and the allure of magic in sparking curiosity and wonder in both Max and the readers.
- ✓ Anti-bullying and standing up for oneself: Discuss the theme of standing up to bullies and finding the courage to confront them, drawing parallels to Max's experiences with Bottley the Bully.
- ✓ Discovering hidden potential: Explore the concept of discovering hidden talents and potential, as seen through Max's journey with the unusual chest from Gran's antique shop and how it changes his perspective on what is possible.
- ✓ Family bonds and support: Observe the importance of family support in Max's life, particularly his relationship with his dad and Gran, and the role of family in overcoming challenges.

Subjects: • English • PSHE

About Max Magic...

Max Mullers loves doing magic tricks – one day he'll be the greatest magician in the world: MAX THE MAGNIFICENT!

But first, he's got to figure out how to get Bottley the Bully off his back and save Dad's market stall from East End meanies, the Crayfish Twins. Not even his slickest tricks can help him!

Then, Max discovers a rather unusual chest at Gran's antique shop and all of a sudden...
ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR - STEPHEN MULHERN

Stephen Mulhern is one of the most in-demand television presenters today, with a string of smash-hit television shows including Catchphrase, In For a Penny and Rolling In It. As well as his TV career, Stephen is an experienced all-round entertainer, having performed his very own magic and one-man variety shows up and down the country for the past 12 years. He has performed for some of the most recognised people in the world, including Her Majesty the Queen!

ABOUT THE CO-AUTHOR - TOM EASTON

Tom Easton has published more than forty books for readers of all ages. He has written books about vampires, pirates, teenage girl boxers and teenage boy knitters (not all in the same book). He lives in Surrey with his wife and three children. You can find out more about him at www.tomeaston.co.uk or on X/Twitter @TomEaston.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR - BEGOÑA FERNÁNDEZ CORBALÁN

Begoña Fernández Corbalán was born and raised in a small town in Spain. As a child, she loved to draw, and after finishing a degree in Fine Arts, she specialised in illustration. She works with watercolour, gouache and pencil as well as illustrating digitally.

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PRE-READING: COVER, BLURB AND INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When you look at the front cover, what's the first thing that catches your eye? Was it the boy in the middle or his friends the dog around him? Or did something else immediately stand out to you?
2. Can you identify the author and illustrator of the book? Look for their names on either the front or back cover. Have you read any other books by this author or illustrator before? If so, which ones?
3. What type or genre of story do you think this book might be? (e.g. magical, adventure, etc.)
4. The book is called 'Max Magic'. Why do you think the author chose this title? Can you spot the magical things in the letters 'A' and 'i' of the title? What do you think these magical objects might mean?
5. Based on the clues on the front cover, what do you think the book might be about? Feel free to brainstorm different possibilities and share your predictions on where you think the story might lead.
6. Now, let's read the blurb together. What do you imagine the main character's daily life is like? Can you guess what challenges they might face in the story? How do you think they feel about these?
7. How do you think finding the chest in his Gran's shop might change things for Max?
8. If you could step into the world of Max Magic, what do you think you would see and experience based on the cover?
9. Which part of the blurb interests you the most? Does it leave you with more questions than answers?
10. After seeing the cover and reading the blurb, how do you feel about reading this book? Why do you feel that way?

EXTRACT 1: ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

(from CHAPTER 1 - ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE: pages 1-2)

Anything Is Possible.

I've always thought that. There are too many people in the world who want to say no. People who want to stop you doing the things you dream about. People who tell you that you can't be successful if you don't talk posh, or that you'll never get anywhere if you're no good at school. Or that you'll never reach your dreams however hard you try.

I have always believed that anything is possible, no matter how hard things are. I have also always believed in real magic, making the impossible possible! I've seen things and done things that are unbelievable.

In many ways I'm just an ordinary kid, with an ordinary life, in an ordinary world. But there is something special about me too. Something different. Something extraordinary. And if you read on, I'll tell you about it. About how it all started, and how it all ended up.

Let's start at the beginning. I'm Max, Max Mullers. Sometimes people call me Max Magic. One day I hope they'll call me Max the Magnificent, but I'm not quite there yet.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does Max introduce himself to the reader? What does he want to share with them?
2. Max expresses his belief that anything is possible. Do you agree with him or do you think there are any limits to what someone can achieve? Why?
3. What are some examples Max gives to support his belief in the possibility of anything?
4. Can you think of something you've done that you once thought was impossible?
5. Describe Max's attitude towards people who doubt him. How does he respond to their negativity?
6. Has anyone ever told you that you couldn't do something? How did you feel? What did you do?
7. Max says believing in yourself is really important. How can self-belief help someone? Can you think of a time when you believed in yourself and it helped you do something difficult?
8. What adjectives would you use to describe Max? Think about adjectives that show what kind of person he is. Is he determined, resilient or optimistic? What other words can you think of to describe him?
9. Max wants people to call him "Max the Magnificent" in the future. Why do you think that name is special to him? If you could pick a special nickname for yourself, what would it be?
10. Just like Max, we all have dreams and goals. What are some of yours? How do you think you could begin turning them into reality?

ACTIVITY 1: BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE

- Begin by reading aloud the opening extract from Chapter 1 of *Max Magic*, using an expressive and engaging tone to capture the children's attention.
- Engage children in a brief discussion about the main messages of the extract, focusing on the themes of self-belief and the possibility of achieving anything. Create a supportive and inclusive environment where they all feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings.
- Introduce the concept of self-belief in more detail, using relatable examples or stories to illustrate the point. For example, you could tell a story about a character who faced challenges but never gave up because they believed in themselves.
- Highlight the idea that everyone has the power to believe in themselves and accomplish great things, just like Max in the story.
- You could also do an interactive activity to reinforce the concept of self-belief, such as inviting children to stand up and share one thing they believe they are good at. Record their strengths on the board to create a collective list of achievements and develop a sense of pride and confidence among them.
- Next, explore how Max discusses his dreams and aspirations in the extract, inspiring us to dream big.
- Provide each child with the activity sheet and ask them to write down their own dreams and goals. Remind them to think creatively and ambitiously and that there are no limits to what they can dream.
- Bring the class back together and facilitate a group discussion based on the dreams and goals generated in the brainstorming session.
- Encourage children to share their dreams with the class and explain why they are important to them.
- Discuss the idea that everyone's dreams are unique and valid, and that everyone has the potential to achieve their own goals with determination and self-belief.
- Use probing questions to deepen the discussion, such as: "What steps can you take to work towards your dream?", "How can you overcome challenges or obstacles that may arise?" and "Who can support you on your journey towards achieving your goal?"
- Discuss how sometimes people might not believe in our dreams, just like Max experiences in the story. Talk about how it feels when someone doubts us and how it can make us feel unsure about ourselves and our dreams.
- Explore ways to deal with doubt and negativity from others, such as staying true to ourselves, believing in our abilities and seeking support from friends and family.
- End the lesson on a positive note, reminding children that they are all capable of greatness and that their dreams are within reach with perseverance and self-belief.



Discovering my dreams!

Instructions: Listen carefully as we read the opening extract from Chapter 1 of Max Magic.
Using Max's words as inspiration, complete the activity sheet by writing down your own dreams and goals.

Imagine you can achieve anything you dream of. Draw or write down a big dream or goal you have for yourself in the space.



Think about one step you can take to work towards achieving one of your dreams. Write it here.

Who can support you on your journey towards achieving your dream? Write their names below.

EXTRACT 2: FAMILY MAGIC

(from CHAPTER 1 - ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE: pages 7-10)

The most important thing to know about me is that I have always loved magic. It runs in our family – Gran and Grandpa were stage magicians back in the day. I’ll tell you more about them later. The point is, Gran taught Dad loads of tricks when he was little. She says he always had a real gift for magic and that he could have been one of the greats. But for some reason he didn’t follow in her footsteps. He never went onstage at all – I guess he was more interested in selling stuff. He was still pretty good and he’d always get out his tricks at parties or Christmas and often used his skills to help him sell toys on the stall. And when I was old enough, Dad started teaching me. The first trick he showed me was how to palm a coin. Now, a magician isn’t supposed to reveal the trick behind the magic, but you seem pretty trustworthy, so I’ll tell you how to do it, if you promise to keep it to yourself.

It works best with a biggish coin, like a two-pound piece. You press it into the palm of your hand and squeeze your thumb in so the fleshy part of your palm holds the coin in place. You can then turn your hand palm down without the coin dropping out. Next you pretend to throw it into the other hand, quickly closing it into a fist. The audience is surprised when you open the fist and it’s empty. Then you pass the hand with the coin above it and drop the coin, closing it into a fist again. When you reopen your hand, this time the coin is there!

‘Show me another trick,’ I said, once I thought I had it.

But Dad shook his head. ‘Practise that one first,’ he said. ‘Once you have it perfect, then we’ll move on to the next.’

So I did. Every day after school I’d go up to my bedroom in our little terraced house in Coronation Square and I’d practise and practise and practise. It never felt like work. I loved it, especially when I knew I was getting better.

And then one day, when I was sure I really had it, I showed Dad and I got it just perfect.

He nodded and took out a packet of cards from his inside pocket. ‘Let me show you the Floating Card Trick,’ he said.

It was then that I decided that one day I was going to be a magician, a real magician, and I was going to perform in front of huge audiences just like Gran and Grandpa had. And my tricks were going to be so good that no one would ever be able to tell how they were done.

EXTRACT 2: FAMILY MAGIC

(from CHAPTER 1 - ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE: pages 7-10)

Continued

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How is magic a part of Max's family? Who passed down the knowledge of magic to whom?
2. What was the very first magic trick that Max learned from his dad? Have you ever tried learning any magic tricks yourself?
3. Why do you think magic has been a form of entertainment for thousands of years? Do you believe in magic?
4. Why do magicians keep their tricks secret? What do you think would happen if they shared them?
5. Can you name any famous magicians? What do you think made them famous?
6. Do you think knowing how a magic trick is done makes it less enjoyable to watch? Why?
7. What advice does Max's dad tell him? Why do you think it's important for Max to practise magic every day? How do you think practising regularly helps him to get better at performing tricks?
8. Why do you think Max loves practising magic so much? What's your favourite thing to practise?
9. Can you remember a time when you practised something every day? How did it feel?
10. Do you think the saying "practice makes perfect" is true? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY 2: PRACTICE MAKES MAGIC

- Start the session by asking children if they have ever seen a magic show on TV or someone performing tricks in person. Then, encourage them to talk about what they saw, how it made them feel and any favourite tricks they remember.
- Discuss the names of famous magicians with the children. Ask them if they have ever seen or heard of magicians like Dynamo, Harry Houdini, David Copperfield and Stephen Mulhern, the author of Max Magic. You could show some videos of these performing tricks to illustrate their artistry and mystery.
- Highlight here that many famous magicians are men, while women are often portrayed as the magician's assistant, reflecting a stereotypical aspect of traditional roles in magic performances.
- Talk about how historically, the role of the magician's assistant has often been filled by women, there are also many talented female magicians who have made significant contributions to the world of magic like Max's gran such as Fay Presto, Dorothy Dietrich and Adelaide Herrmann. This opens up discussions about gender stereotypes and the importance of breaking barriers in all fields.
- Next, introduce the Magic Circle to the children as a unique and exclusive group for magicians established in 1905 in London, England. Explain that membership is by qualification only and describe how it is dedicated to promoting the art of magic and hosts various events to help magicians enhance their skills and share knowledge with others. Additionally, mention that until 1991, the Magic Circle only accepted male members, which may explain why there aren't as many famous female magicians.
- Transition to reading the provided extract aloud to the children and point out the key points from it, such as Max's family history with magic, his introduction to magic by his dad, the importance of practice in mastering magic tricks and Max's determination to follow in his Gran's footsteps to become a magician.
- Inspired by Max's dedication to regular practice, tell the children that it's their turn to try their hand at practising and performing the magic trick of palming a coin that is mentioned in the book.
- Divide the class into small groups and provide them with the required materials for the magic trick, such as coins, along with the activity sheet containing step-by-step instructions from Stephen Mulhern, which are also featured at the back of the book.
- Guide the children through following the instructions to practise the tricks, offering assistance and encouragement as needed. Encourage them to ask questions if they're unsure about any steps.
- Allow the children plenty of time to practise and become comfortable with performing the trick. Remind them that practice takes time and reassure them that it's okay to make mistakes while learning. In addition to practising with the activity sheet, children may also find it helpful to watch video tutorials of the tricks to complement the instructions.
- Once the groups feel confident with their tricks, encourage them to perform their magic tricks to the rest of the class if they wish. This gives them an opportunity to showcase their skills and share the magic with their classmates.



How to palm a coin with Stephen Mulhern!

1 Take a £2 coin in one hand.



2 Squeeze your thumb in so that you're gripping the coin.

3 Turn your hands over, palm down, without the coin dropping out.



Both hands should be in the same position.



4 Turn your hands so your palms face each other and pretend to throw the coin from one hand to the other, making a fist as if you have caught it.

Practise in front of a mirror.



5 Open your empty fist to reveal . . . no coin! It seems as though the coin has vanished, but it never left the first hand.

6 Wave the hand holding the coin over the other hand, sneakily dropping the coin from one to the other, and then quickly close the hand now holding the coin into a fist. . .



7 Finally open your fist – the coin has reappeared!



Video yourself doing the trick and watch it back.

EXTRACT 3A: DON'T BELIEVE THE (HOROSCOPE) HYPE **(from CHAPTER 2 - THE DAY OF DESTINY: pages 33-34)**

Mum was leaning on the kitchen counter, reading out everyone's horoscopes. The horoscopes was the only bit of the paper she was interested in. Mum loves horoscopes and astrology and that sort of thing. She reads a magazine called 'Astral Plane'. Dad says it's all claptrap and has no scientific basis. She replies that that's just what a Leo would say.

'It says today is going to be a day of destiny for you, Max,' Mum said, peering at her paper. 'A day that will change your life!'

'Just me, or all Aries?' I asked.

'They don't name you. So must be all Aries, I suppose,' Mum said.

'Big day for Aries,' I said. I had a piece of toast and a cup of tea. Then I said goodbye to Lucky and grabbed my school bag. Mum always drops Lucky around at Gran's shop on her way to work, and I pick him up on my way home. It's like he has a job that he has to go to every day, except the job is basically just him sleeping on an old armchair in Gran's back room.

I reckon there are worse jobs.

As I walked out the door, Mum handed me a chocolate bar for my snack and said, 'Have a magical day, Max.'

'I'll do my best!' I replied with a grin.

EXTRACT 3B: SKIPPING SCHOOL

(from CHAPTER 10 - PLANS APLENTY: pages 231-232)

'What does my horoscope say today?' I asked.

She smiled and peered at the paper in front of her, squinting. I concentrated hard, feeling the tingling in my chest. I saw the words on the page. I concentrated harder. The letters rearranged themselves into different patterns.

Mum frowned, read the horoscope again and then read it out loud. 'Aries should avoid school today. No good can come of it.' She looked up at me, her expression puzzled and more than a little alarmed.

'What?!' I said in a shocked voice.

'But I absolutely must go to school today. I need to learn!'

Mum read the horoscope for a fourth time. 'Sorry, Max,' she said. 'The stars must not be trifled with. I don't think you should go to school.'

'Well... darn it,' I said, trying not to grin. I shook my head in feigned distress. 'What a terrible, terrible shame.'

'Don't overdo it,' Lucky growled.

An hour later I was down the market, wearing my hat, in front of Astral Alice's Tent of Telling. Daisy had texted us to tell us where to meet. She had had an idea.

EXTRACTS 3A AND 3B

Continued

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In the first extract, why does Max's mum read out horoscopes every morning?
2. Have you ever heard about horoscopes or astrology before? What do you think they are?
3. Do you know your star sign? Do you look it up to see what it says about you?
4. How does Max's mum feel about horoscopes and astrology? How does Max's dad feel about them? Why do you think some people believe in them while others don't?
5. Do you think it's important for family members to respect each other's beliefs, even if they don't agree with them?
6. Max's mum wishes him a 'magical day' before he leaves. What do you think she means by that? Do you think Max's day will turn out to be magical? Why or why not?
7. What's your opinion on horoscopes and astrology? Do you think they're just for fun or do you think they can really tell the future? What makes you think that?
8. In the second extract, how does Max react to his horoscope's advice to avoid school? Do you think that's what it really said or has Max used one of his powers to change it?
9. Why do you think Daisy wanted to meet at Astral Alice's Tent of Telling? What kind of ideas do you think she might have had to go there?
10. How does the author use humour in the story? Can you find any examples in these extracts?

ACTIVITY 3: STAR SIGNS

- Start by asking the children if they've ever heard of horoscopes or astrology. Allow them to share what they know.
- Explain that today, we're going to learn more about horoscopes, which are like special messages based on our birthdays.
- Introduce the extracts from the story as a way to explore how people think about horoscopes, pausing to discuss: Max's mum's excitement about horoscopes; Max's dad's opinion that horoscopes are silly and Max's funny reaction to his horoscope saying he shouldn't go to school in the second extract.
- Lead a discussion with the class about the different perspectives on horoscopes presented in the story. Ask them to think about why people might believe in horoscopes and why others might not. Discuss the importance of respecting each other's beliefs, even if we don't agree with them and encourage them to express their own opinions and discuss whether they think horoscopes are just for fun or if they believe they can predict the future.
- Next, you could also delve deeper into the theme of belief systems and personal agency. Encourage children to reflect on times when they've made decisions based on something they believe in, whether it's a superstition, a family tradition or something else like a 'gut feeling' or 'hunch'. Ask them to share examples from their own lives and discuss how beliefs can influence our actions and choices.
- Describe how horoscopes are like messages that some people believe are connected to the positions of stars and planets when someone is born. They're often associated with astrological signs, like Aries or Leo, mentioned in the extracts, which are linked to specific dates of birth.
 - Aries: 21 March - 19 April
 - Taurus: 20 April - 20 May
 - Gemini: 21 May - 20 June
 - Cancer: 21 June - 22 July
 - Leo: 23 July - 22 August
 - Virgo: 23 August - 22 September
 - Libra: 23 September - 22 October
 - Scorpio: 23 October - 21 November
 - Sagittarius: 22 November - 21 December
 - Capricorn: 22 December - 19 January
 - Aquarius: 20 January - 18 February
 - Pisces: 19 February - 20 March
- Tell them that horoscopes are thought to offer insights into a person's personality traits, future events, or even daily advice, based on their astrological sign. Some people find comfort or amusement in reading their horoscope, while others might not believe in them at all.
- Using the activity sheet, ask children to research their horoscope and find out which zodiac sign they belong to based on their date of birth. Encourage them to read about the characteristics associated with their sign and reflect on whether they think these descriptions match their personality. They can also discuss with their classmates about whether they believe in horoscopes and why.

Horoscope Hunt!

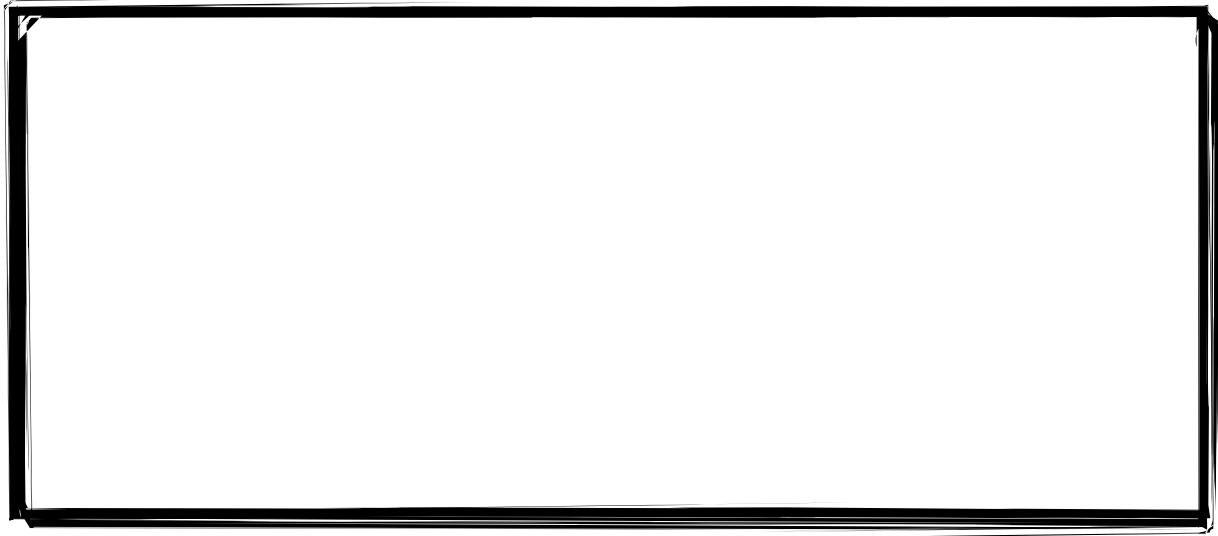


Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Find out which zodiac sign corresponds to your date of birth and draw a symbol or representation of it below..

My Sign of the Zodiac is: _____



Once you've identified your zodiac sign, read about the characteristics associated with it. Write down three traits that you think describe you well and three traits that you don't think match your personality.

Traits that describe me:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Traits that don't describe me:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write a short reflection on what you've learned from this activity. Include your thoughts on whether you believe in horoscopes and why.



EXTRACT 4A: BOTTLEY THE BULLY

(from CHAPTER 1 - ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE: pages 19-21)

Most things in my life are great, fantastic, fabulous. MAGIC!

But some things aren't quite so good. Like school, and schoolwork, schoolteachers and school bullies. Yeah, it's mostly school-related things I'm not too keen on. I'm not sure I'll ever actually learn anything at school – I'm too busy chatting. But you never know. Anything is possible!

Even school has its good points. That's where I met my best friends, like Sophie and Stretch and Daisy. And school is where I like to test out my magic tricks on unsuspecting fellow pupils.

Being able to do magic is useful, as well as fun. Magic can get you out of a sticky spot.

The thing is, my school is a little bit . . . well, rough. There are fights in the playground most days, and that's just the teachers. I've got some great friends there, but my school has more than its fair share of bullies too. Sometimes at school it seems as though the bullies outnumber the nice kids and might run out of people to bully and have to bully each other. That's not a bad idea actually. Can we just get the bullies to bully each other and leave the rest of us alone? Something to think about.

Anyway, most people have their own way of dealing with bullies. Some hide away in the library, some fight back, some people join the bullies and do a bit of bullying themselves, some people hand over their lunch money and shrug.

Me? I use magic. Before school, at break time, at lunchtime and after school, I'm somewhere in the playground doing tricks, finding eggs behind people's ears, palming coins, flipping cards, practising my patter. Even the bullies stop bullying for a while and watch me.

At least most of them do.

All except one.

George Bottley.

The worst bully of them all. Some bullies are clever and sly. Some bullies are angry and stupid. Bottley is just mean.

Big and mean. Not particularly stupid, not particularly sly. Just mean.

EXTRACT 4B: TWIN TROUBLE

(from CHAPTER 4 - MARKET MAYHEM: pages 84-85)

Dad and I helped the Kumars clear up the mess. They'd seen the whole thing, so at least they didn't blame me. But there was a lot of clearing up to do. The spices made my eyes water and I felt a choking cough at the back of my throat from the chilli powder hanging in the air. Why did it have to be spices? What a disaster.

'Sorry, Dad,' I said once we were done. I'd disappointed him three times today, and that felt worse than anything. 'It wasn't your fault, son,' Dad said. 'Like you said, the Crayfish Twins are bullies.'

'If only there was something we could do about them,' I said.

I didn't just mean the twins. I meant all bullies. All people who steal from you, just as a price for not hurting you, and make you feel bad for simply existing.

'Some things you just can't fix,' Dad sighed. 'And sometimes life isn't fair.'

I knew exactly how Dad felt. Between us, we now had Bottley and the Crayfish Twins on our backs.

EXTRACTS 4A AND 4B

Continued

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are some things Max finds hard in his life? How does he feel about going to school and why?
2. Who is the person at Max's school who is causing him trouble through bullying?
3. What is bullying? Can you describe it in your own words?
4. How do you think bullying makes the person being bullied feel?
5. Alongside those mentioned, what other forms of bullying can you think of?
6. Why do you think some people become bullies?
7. What would you do if you saw someone being bullied? How would you help them?
8. Who is bullying Max's dad at the stall?
9. Do you agree with Max's dad's statement that "some things you just can't fix" and "sometimes life isn't fair"? Why or why not?
10. Besides magic, what else could Max and his dad consider doing to stand up to the bullies?

ACTIVITY 4: BEING AWARE OF BULLIES

- Start by writing the word 'bullying' on the board and invite children to share their understanding of the term. Encourage them to express their thoughts freely and record their range of responses around the word to create a visual representation of their collective understanding.
- After compiling their suggestions, reinforce their existing knowledge and understanding of bullying by discussing the different forms or types of bullying that exist. These include:
 - Physical: This includes any form of physical harm or aggression towards others, such as hitting, kicking, pushing or damaging property.
 - Verbal: This involves using words to hurt, humiliate or intimidate others, such as name-calling, teasing or spreading rumours.
 - Social: This involves manipulating relationships or social status to exclude, ostracise or embarrass others, such as spreading rumours, gossiping or purposefully ignoring someone.
 - Cyberbullying: This occurs through digital channels, such as social media, text messages or other communication, and can involve harassment, threats or spreading of harmful content.
 - Financial: This involves using money to control, manipulate, or intimidate others, such as stealing money, demanding expensive items or coercing someone into giving them money.
- As you talk about each, engage them in a conversation about the impact these behaviours can have and the importance of recognising and addressing them in their school community.
- Emphasise that bullying is entirely unacceptable and that children should actively contribute to creating a safe and inclusive environment for everyone.
- Talk also about the people involved in bullying, which includes victims, bystanders and the individuals who engage in bullying behaviour. Encourage children to consider the roles each person plays in a bullying situation and discuss the responsibilities of bystanders in particular. Highlight the importance of bystanders speaking up and taking action to support the victim and address the behaviour of the bully.
- Read the two extracts, which show the experiences of Max and his dad in dealing with the people bullying them.
- As a class, ask them to empathise with Max and his dad by imagining themselves in their situation and brainstorm ideas on how they could stand up to the bullies. Possible responses could include: speaking up and telling a trusted adult about the bullying; assertively stand up to the bullies by calmly but firmly telling them to stop their behaviour; ignoring the bullies and walking away from the situation; keep a record of the bullying incidents they experience in order to report to authorities such as the police.
- To finish, prompt children to use what they've brainstormed to provide their own personal advice on what Max and/or his dad should do next by responding to them in an agony aunt-style letter using the activity sheet. Encourage them to offer thoughtful suggestions and solutions based on the characters' experiences with bullying.



Agony Aunt!



Write your agony aunt-style letter back to Max and/or his dad, offering them advice and support based on what you've learned about bullying.

Dear Agony Aunt,

I need your help! I'm Max and I've been having a tough time at school because of bullies like George Bottley. He makes me feel small and miserable and I don't know what to do. I've tried using magic tricks to distract him, but it only works for a little while.
What should I do next?

Thanks,
Max

Dear Agony Aunt,

I've been feeling really down lately because of the bullies at the stall where I sell toys. They make things difficult by demanding money that I don't have and I don't know how to make it stop. Sometimes life isn't fair and there are things that seem impossible to fix, but I don't want to keep feeling this way. Can you help?

Best wishes,
Max's Dad

Dear _____



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS

- **Author Study and Q&A Session:** Find out more about the author of the book, Stephen Mulhern and if possible, arrange an in-person Q&A session or virtual visit where children can ask him questions about the writing process and inspiration behind the story.
- **Design Your Own Magic Trick:** Challenge children to design their own magic trick inspired by the ones in the book. They can create step-by-step instructions and perform their tricks for the class.
- **Creative Writing:** Ask the children to imagine themselves as characters in the story. Have them write a short story or diary entry describing a day in the life of Max Mullers, complete with his magical adventures and encounters with Bottley the Bully and his dad's with the Crayfish Twins.
- **Illustration Station:** Set up an illustration station with art supplies where children can draw their favourite scenes from the book.
- **Role-Play:** Divide the class into groups and assign each group a bullying scenario from the book or based on real-life situations. Have them act out the scenario, with one child playing the victim (i.e. Max or his dad) and others playing the roles of bystanders, bullies and allies. Afterwards, facilitate a discussion about what each character could have done differently to address the bullying.
- **Anti-Bullying Poster Campaign:** Have the children create posters with anti-bullying messages inspired by the themes of Max Magic. They can include quotes from the book, illustrations of characters standing up to bullies, and tips for preventing bullying in school. Display the posters around the classroom or school to raise awareness.
- **Creative Book Covers:** Let imaginations run wild as children create their own book covers for Max Magic, inspired by the original illustrations by Begoña Fernández Corbalán. They can have fun exploring different designs and colours to capture the essence of the story in their own unique way.
- **Character Interview Podcast:** Task children with creating a podcast where they conduct fictional interviews with characters from the book. They can prepare questions based on the characters' experiences throughout the story, offering insights into their perspectives and the themes of the book.
- **Bullying Awareness Assembly:** Hold a whole school assembly focused on raising awareness about bullying and promoting kindness and respect. Invite guest speakers, such as charities, counsellors or community leaders, to talk about the impact of bullying and share strategies for prevention.
- **Random Acts of Kindness Challenge:** Encourage children to perform random acts of kindness for their classmates throughout the week. Discuss how small acts of kindness can help combat bullying and create a positive school culture.
- **DIY Telekinesis Experiments:** Set up hands-on experiments that simulate the magical feats that Max does in the book. For example, have children use static electricity to make a balloon move without touching it, or demonstrate how magnetic forces can cause objects to seemingly move on their own. Encourage them to hypothesise and experiment to understand the science behind these phenomena.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES - KEY STAGE 2

English

Spoken language

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates

Reading – comprehension

Pupils should be taught to:

- maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by:
 - continuing to read and discuss an increasingly wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks
 - increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books, including myths, legends and traditional stories, modern fiction, fiction from our literary heritage, and books from other cultures and traditions
 - recommending books that they have read to their peers, giving reasons for their choices
 - identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing
- understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by:
 - drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence
 - predicting what might happen from details stated and implied
 - summarising the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas

Writing: composition

Pupils should be taught to:

- plan their writing by:
 - discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar
- develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:
 - writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)

PSHE (taken from Programme of Study for PSHE education: KS1-5)

Pupils learn:

Managing hurtful behaviour and bullying

- R10. that bodies and feelings can be hurt by words and actions; that people can say hurtful things online
- R11. about how people may feel if they experience hurtful behaviour or bullying
- R12. that hurtful behaviour (offline and online) including teasing, name-calling, bullying and deliberately excluding others is not acceptable; how to report bullying; the importance of telling a trusted adult
- R19. about the impact of bullying, including offline and online, and the consequences of hurtful behaviour
- R20. strategies to respond to hurtful behaviour experienced or witnessed, offline and online (including teasing, name-calling, bullying, trolling, harassment or the deliberate excluding of others); how to report concerns and get support
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