The Children of Lir

What can you see in the picture?

Who do you think these people could be?

Who do you think is jealous?

Look at the following words. What do you think the story is about?

- king
- wife
- castle
- 4 children
- jealous
- magic
- swans
- 900 years
- lonely
The Children of Lir

Once upon a time, King Lir lived with his wife and four children: Fionnuala, Aodh, Fiachra and Conn, in a castle in the Irish countryside. When Lir’s wife passed away, they were all heartbroken. After several years, Lir was introduced to another woman called Aoife; they soon got married.

Aoife was a jealous woman and believed that Lir adored his children more than her. Before long, Aoife decided to get rid of the children.

One warm day in the summer, when Aoife was looking after the children, she decided to take the children swimming in a lake near the castle. The children were really looking forward to their day out. When the children were playing in the water, Aoife suddenly took a magic wand from her coat and waved it at the children. There was a flash of light and the children disappeared. Now, in their place, were four beautiful white swans.

Aoife laughed, “Now, you will be swans for nine hundred years, until you hear the ring of a Christian bell”.

Aoife raced back to the castle and told Lir that the four children had drowned in the lake. Lir broke down before racing down to the lake, but all he could see were four beautiful swans. One of the swans suddenly spoke. It was Fionnuala. She explained that Aoife had turned them into swans. Lir spent the rest of his life by the lake and when Lir died, many years later, the children were again heartbroken. They had now lost both their parents.

The children lived a lonely life for hundreds of years. Early one morning, they couldn’t believe their ears; it was the sound of a Christian bell. They were all instantly turned back into humans. Fionnuala put her arms around her brothers and they all suddenly fell on the ground. A monk came across them by the lake and buried them all together in one grave. That night he had a dream of four swans flying through the clouds. He then knew the children of Lir would be reunited with their parents in heaven.
Let’s write a letter!

**What should we write?**

**Dear Aoife,**

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**From your husband, King Lir.**
# Teachers Notes:

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<th>Level</th>
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| Topic | The Children of Lir – An ancient Irish legend  
There was a time in mystical Irish history when people believed in magic and spells. There were the days of the Tuatha De Danann, an Irish tribe. The Children of Lir is one of their stories. |
| Author | Aoife McLoughlin |
| Lesson Aim | Introduce students to Irish mythology  
Practise scan reading – answer questions on text ‘A’  
Practise skim reading- Ordering the texts ‘B’ ‘C’ and ‘D’  
Recap past simple – changing verbs into past simple tense  
Phrasal verbs – deduce meaning from context  
Spoken Interaction – creating/writing a collaborative letter in groups using three new phrasal verbs |
| CEFR Student Learning Outcomes | Listening:  
I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar, everyday subjects, provided there is an opportunity to get repetition or clarification sometimes.  
Reading:  
I can read simplified versions of novels, plus stories with a clear structure, with little use of a dictionary.  
Spoken Production:  
I can relate the main content of short texts I have read.  
Written Production:  
I can write letters describing my experiences and feelings. |
| Lexical Aim | 8 lexical items:  
To pass away, to get rid of, to look after, to look forward to, to break down, to turn into, to turn back, to come across. |
| Interaction Patterns | Pair work  
Group work  
Whole class |
| Preparation | Cut out story card A for all students  
Cut out story cards B,C and D for each student in the group |
Lesson:
Write ‘Mythology’ on the whiteboard and elicit meaning. Do students know of any myths from their countries?

Describe the Picture:
Pair students and ask them to describe the picture to each other. Elicit lexical items such as swans, sea, cliffs.

Predict the Story:
Ask students to look at the words in the box and with their partner, discuss what the story might be about. Briefly get class feedback.

Hand out page two – ‘Text A’
In the same pairs, ask students to read the text and together with their partner, answer the question – ‘How did the King’s wife feel?’ (Jealous)
Students read Text A and discuss what is going to happen next in the story. Draw students’ attention to the two underlined phrasal verbs and elicit meaning.

Jigsaw Groups:
Group students into 3 groups (B, C and D)
Give each student in group B, text B. Repeat with groups C and D.
Together students read their texts and try to ‘piece together’ and predict the story from the information they have. Briefly get feedback.

Phrasal Verbs:
In the same groups, students focus on the phrasal verbs, changing each one in to the infinitive form. *E.g.* – looking forward to = to look forward to. Encourage students not to worry about meaning for the moment. Get class feedback, correcting any errors. Now, students work together to focus on the meaning of the phrasal verbs in their text. Encourage them to find meaning, through context.

Reporting Back:
Change students in to new A, B, C groups, taking one student from each of the three groups to form new groups, which all have read A, B and C texts. Students take turns to summarise the story to their partners and together construct the story.

Writing Task:
Hand out the letter. Give students a new partner and together they write a letter from King Lir to his wife. Swap letters around the class.