



Beauty, The Beast and You -
a creative challenge exploring
the 'tale as old as time'



TEACHER GUIDANCE

Immerse students in the oldest of all fairy tales, *Beauty and the Beast*, by bringing to life in the classroom the main characters from the book and Disney Theatrical stage show. Explore key themes of innovation, empowerment through reading and the downfall of judging on appearances.

THE CHALLENGE

Beauty and the Beast has three characters central to the story: Belle, the Beast and Maurice. This reading challenge encourages students to analyse, interpret and be inspired by these three main characters and explain their understanding through creative drawings, written work and class wall displays.

In partnership with Disney Theatrical Productions, we have provided resources that can be utilised to help students understand the magical art of story-telling and encourage reading for pleasure.

These guidelines are written to support your delivery but of course, please adapt the challenge to suit the time you have available, the delivery methods you are using, and your students' needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, it is important to familiarise your students with the story although many will know it from watching film versions or from traditional fairy-tale books. It could be helpful to discover their understanding of what they have seen or read so far, and to discuss their perceptions of the story, the characters, and the relevance of a fairy-tale in today's world.

Please take a look at the synopsis of the stage show, provided by Disney Theatrical. This resource not only gives a summary of the stage show but also a background on the story, particularly around why literature and reading have such a defining role in Belle's life. (Resource download: background and synopsis).



FOCUS ON THE MAIN CHARACTERS

Extracts from the script are provided to draw attention to each character's identity and portrayal in the story. Perhaps some willing students could perform these aloud to the rest of the class? (Resource download: script extracts and insights).

- first impressions: Belle is perceived as odd, a loner and cut off from reality whereas in fact, she reads constantly to broaden her mind and hopes for far wider horizons.
- conflicted characters: the Beast has hidden qualities of kindness and loyalty, contrasting with the shallowness and insincerity of Gaston, but displays only anger and cruelty
- stereotypes: Maurice, the fatherly and eccentric professor whose inventive ideas of limited success easily lead people to undermine him and not take him seriously.

GETTING STARTED ON THE CHALLENGE

Curriculum guidelines for Key Stage 2

Pupils should be taught to maintain positive attitudes to reading and an 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
- identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing
- making comparisons within and across books
- provide reasoned justifications for their views



- Ask students to draw their own illustrations of the three main characters in the story, as a costume designer would do when creating a stage production, and to write down words and ideas that reflect on that character's key themes
 - **Belle:** What are Belle's aspirations in the story and what are the students' own aspirations? What motivates these aspirations?
 - **Maurice:** Write a design brief for an invention that improves the environment, and illustrate it as much as possible. As an inventor with many ideas, how would Maurice be seen in modern times compared to in the story?
 - **Beast:** How is the concept of beauty portrayed in the story and what is the students' own idea and understanding beauty? How does the Beast's understanding of beauty change throughout the story?
- The class can present their character descriptions and costume design ideas to each other through drama and oracy activities:

Hot seating – Volunteers can take on one of the roles and be asked questions by their peers which they answer in character e.g. where they live, their daily activities and description of favourite things

Freeze frames – working in pairs or small groups create a still image that show a character in different locations e.g. the castle, the village, the forest.

Improvise a scene – in pairs or small groups characters meet someone new to the village. How do they introduce themselves, how would they react to meeting someone new?

- Once complete, display their collective work on the classroom wall.
- For further discussion, students can explore other stories with similar themes of heroines, inventors and anti-heroes, and discuss how they compare to the characters in *Beauty and the Beast*. These could be modernday books or traditional tales from around the world.

Here are some questions to help you:

- What do we mean by heroines and anti-heroes? How many can we name?
- Do all stories have heroes/heroines?
- Is it unusual to have a heroine in a fairy tale – who usually takes the hero role?
- What other heroines is Belle similar/different to?
- Can you link Belle, Maurice and Beast to characters from other books you have read? E.g. books with characters who are inventors, characters who overcome adversity, who defy expectations or whose appearance is deceptive?

At the end of the class discussions, students can use the reading comparison framework resource to write down their ideas individually, in pairs or groups referencing Text to Self, Text to Text and Text to World. (Resource download: reading comparison framework)

- We recommend that the next task is done at home. Based on the class discussions, and with a wider audience at home, students can draw and describe one or more relevant characters, before bringing them back into class and adding them to the display on the wall. Please hand out the character description worksheet to assist with this task as it gives a framework for the students to work within. (Resource download: character description).



HOW TO ENTER THE CHALLENGE

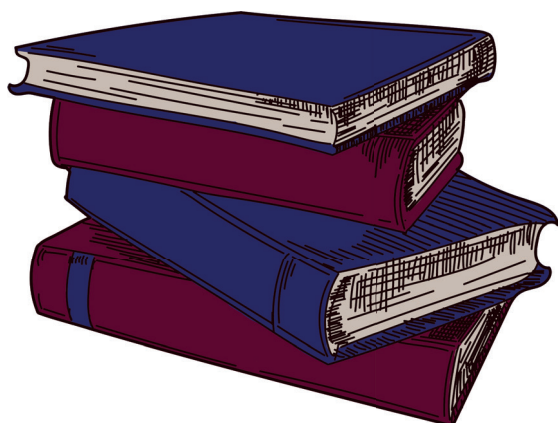
If you have completed this challenge in your school by **Friday 12 November**, you are invited to take a photo of your class wall display and send it in with the name of your school to competitions@literacytrust.org.uk

You will be entered into a prize draw to win copies of *Beauty and the Beast*, branded stationery sets and a tote bag for the teacher!

You are, of course, welcome to complete the challenge without entering the prize draw. You can plan it for a different timeframe that suits you and we'll keep the resources available for you to access throughout the year.

If you have any queries about the challenge then don't hesitate to contact us at competitions@literacytrust.org.uk

See the attached terms and conditions for the prize draw.



WHY READING FOR PLEASURE IS SO IMPORTANT?

We've long known that a love of reading and writing can help children flourish at school and go on to succeed at work. But we now know that reading and writing for enjoyment can also play a vital role in helping children lead happy and healthy lives.

Furthermore, our [survey on reading](#) that we ran during lockdown proved that reading has provided refuge in this difficult time, supporting children's mental wellbeing and enabling them to dream about the future.

- **3 in 5** (59.3%) children and young people told us during lockdown that reading makes them feel better.
- **3 in 10** (31.6%) said that reading helps them when they feel sad because they cannot see their family and friends.
- Reading is encouraging **half of children** (50.2%) to dream about the future.

Our research, [Mental wellbeing, reading and writing](#), found that children who enjoy reading and writing in their free time have significantly better mental wellbeing than their peers who don't.