



Rekindling, the Fire Within- Pushkin Theme for 2015/16

The Pushkin Theme for this year is **'Rekindling, The Fire Within'** and is derived from the element of Fire.

Fire has many manifestations in the physical and natural world and in the world of imagination, intuition and inspiration. The work of the Pushkin Trust is inspired by the great Russian poet and author Alexander Pushkin, here is an extract from a poem written about him by the founder of the trust and his direct descendant, Her Grace Sacha Abercorn.

Pushkin

A coal of burning ebony, passionate fire uncontainable, destined to burn a trace through the strictures of tsardom

Drawn like a moth to the flame of the feminine. The quill that he held between thumb and forefinger like a feather from the breast of the firebird.

Too hot a coal to hold for long, he burnt through the very fabric of his time.

Let that passion burn through all that you do with the theme this year!

Studying and developing this theme requires the exploration of the physical concept of fire and all of its attributes; it's ability to destroy and to cleanse. The teacher may like to explore the physical manifestation of fire in the world of nature as:

- The sun
- Stars
- Lightning
- Volcanoes and the Earth's core

There is also the other dimension of fire as emotion and passion and energy found within every individual. This should be explored and given expression and voice.

Through the media of the Arts and Writing all those participating in the Pushkin programmes this year should have diverse and motivating opportunities to investigate, to explore and to make this theme real.

The suggested activities in these supporting materials are designed to act as starting points or as sparks to inspire the ideas and the imaginations of the teachers and children.

Experiencing the environment through the senses is always an essential aspect of any Pushkin theme and this theme is no different. Children should explore fire in its natural forms and in the energy and miracle of nature too.

While this theme focuses on the creative and environmental aspects of the curriculum teachers may choose to explore the concept across all Learning Areas.

Planning Activity

During this activity the teacher will introduce all the potential aspects of the theme to the class. The suggested planning activity is a Carousel type activity.

For this activity the class should be divided into groups and each group should have time to move around a set of stations which are set up in the classroom.

At each station the teacher should provide a variety of stimuli to introduce the concepts which the theme will cover and to inspire the children's thinking, ideas and questions about the theme.

The teacher could provide books, posters, film clips, images, printed information, websites and real objects, etc as the stimuli. These things focus the children's thinking as well as motivating them.

The stations could include:

Station 1: Physical and natural manifestations:

- The sun
- Stars
- Lightning
- Images from Google Earth of volcanoes
- Insects such as fire flies and glow worms

Station 2: things we light...which give us fire:

- Torches
- Candles
- Lamps
- Bonfires
- The fire in the hearth of a home

Station 3: The Fire Within, Emotions:

- Emotions being displayed; fear, anger, sadness, joy, happiness, jealousy etc
- The consequences of emotions
- Resolution of conflict or conflicting emotions
- Paintings or works of art related to emotions

Station 4: Other things that can be connected to imagination or mythology:

- Dragons
- Phoenix
- Prometheus the Fire Carrier who stole fire for man

Station 5 (optional) Fire as a symbol:

- Fire as a symbol in religions around the world
- Candles used to celebrate religious festivals and feasts
- Flame as the Holy Spirit
- Fireworks and other uses of fire in celebrations, birthday cake candles etc.

Once the children have had time to think about and discuss the materials at each station and to record their ideas or questions then the teacher should lead the class in a feedback and sharing session during which all the children's work can be collated.

Out of this work the teacher could guide the children to create key questions which will underpin the learning during the course of the theme. The children's thinking and some of the images they used could all be displayed as the Planning Board.

Section 1 Natural and Physical Manifestations of Fire



Study 1 – The Sun

Investigating the Sun

Without ‘fire’ there would be nothing.

The Sun which is a ball of burning gas...a massive fire... is the primary energy source for planet Earth. Without its fire nothing would exist or could survive.

It has provided heat and light energy since its creation. In the first activity the children should consider how the energy of the sun is used in so many ways and how so many of our sources of energy are derived from the sun.

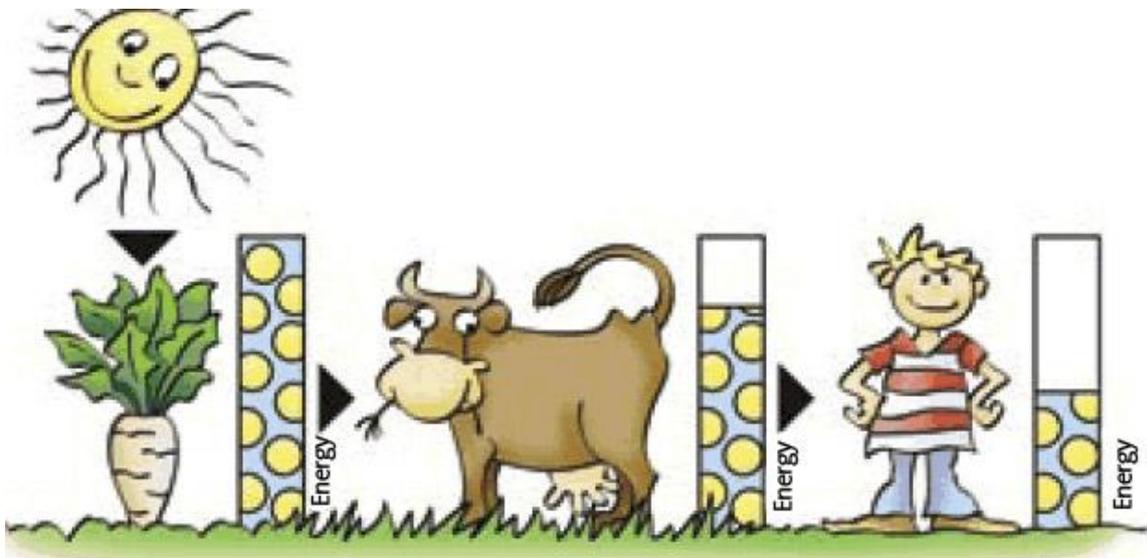
Some information for teachers:

From solar ovens to solar panels, solar energy has been harnessed by humans since the beginning of human history. As far back as the 5th century, humans were constructing homes and buildings to maximize the energy of the sun... it’s fire.

Today, we know the sun as our closest star in the universe. This ball of gas has a large build-up of heat and pressure in its core that causes it to emit heat and radiant energy. Solar energy supports all life on earth and is the basis for almost every form of energy we use. The sun makes plants grow, which provide energy to humans in the form of food. Plant matter can also be burned as biomass fuel or, if compressed underground for millions of years, form fossil fuels like coal or oil. Heat from the sun also causes different temperatures, which produce wind that can power turbines. More energy from the sun falls on the earth in one hour than humans consume in one year.

Unlike various forms of conventional types of energy like coal, oil or natural gas, solar energy is a renewable form of energy. Though a variety of technologies have been developed to take advantage of solar energy in recent years, solar power accounts for less than one percent of electricity use. However, given the abundance of solar energy and its popular appeal, this resource is likely to play a prominent role in our energy future.

This image explains how the energy from the sun becomes energy for us.



Opportunity for Writing 1

The children could consider what the world would be like if the sun 'went out'. How would our world...look, feel, or be...without the energy of the sun?

The children should be encouraged to think about this darkness would affect their senses. Which senses would they need to rely on more?

They should write short brief descriptions of the world in the darkness and coldness without the life giving energy of the sun.

They could create poems by listing what a world in darkness would mean. They could consider all the things that we would not be able to see.

Opportunity for Writing 2

They could also write metaphor poems based on the sun...considering all the ways the sun could be compared to other objects. The children could make a collection of objects to use in the poem...explaining how these objects remind them of or resemble the sun.

For example, they could think of all the things which the sun reminds them of, such as:

A golden beach ball

A large light bulb

A candle

A golden coin

Once the children have collated ideas such as these they can begin to work to extend them and to develop either similes or metaphors. They can be encouraged to add an action to the metaphor. For example;

The sun is a golden beach ball kicked high into a summer sky

The sun is a golden coin lost on a blue cloth

Study 1 Part 2 -Stars

Explain that the pupils are now going to learn some more about the stars.

American astronomer Carl Sagan explained that: The total number of stars in the Universe is larger than all the grains of sand on all the beaches of the planet Earth.

The children could think of similar analogies to try to explain how numerous the stars are:

These could include ideas such as:

The number of stars in the universe is larger than the smiles of a million babies

The stars

Life cycle of stars

Read the following to the class:

Dust and gas in space are pulled together as clouds, sometimes referred to as nebula. Eventually the cloud generates heat energy which ignites the gas and a glowing star is born. Stars burn for many years, depending on their size will determine how many years they will burn for. As the temperature of a star rises it begins to glow red, known as the red giant stage. For smaller stars that begin to run out of energy they start to cool down – known as the white dwarf stage. Once all the energy is burned out the star enters the dark dwarf stage and dies. However, when the biggest stars burn all their energy, they create explosions which result in, for example neutron stars, supernova or black holes. The dust and gas splattered out from these explosions is the start of the cycle again.

Pupils to work in small groups to create a poster that illustrates the life cycle of a star for other children the same age.

Activity Five- Stars in Nature

In this activity the children are going to explore the night sky and use it as a stimulus to create pieces of art in the style of the artist, Andy Goldsworthy.

Andy Goldsworthy is a contemporary artist who takes his inspiration, and creates his work from the earth and natural materials.

He works with; leaves, rocks, snow, ice and sticks, usually.

The children should be asked as homework to view the night sky and to record what they see. They could also take pictures of the night sky to use as a stimulus. Alternatively these could be sourced in books or online.

They should have the opportunity to look at and discuss some works by Andy Goldsworthy. Many of his images can be found using a search engine. Some good examples of his work include;

- Stones arranged by colour
- Rowan leaves and hole
- Icicle Star

The Teacher should introduce the concept of creating an image of the night sky in the style of Andy Goldsworthy.

The children could work in groups to create a piece of work.

In small groups they could discuss and plan their piece. They could consider the materials they will need and how to source these. Using Goldsworthy's images they could plan aspects of their design. Considering which natural materials would represent the various bodies in the night sky. They should have time to collect and collate the resources they will need. When appropriate the children should have time to create their pieces of work and to photograph them as Goldsworthy does. They should have the chance to dismantle their work and recreate further images which could also be photographed.

A gallery of images could be displayed or alternatively the children could set up a blog or webpage to store their photographs.

(As an extra stimulus the Poem "Stars" by Gareth Lancaster could be read. The children could create their work to illustrate this poem. Provided below)

As an extension of the work on Goldsworthy children could work on individual pieces. They could read and discuss the poem "A Star..." by Joy O'Pateng (provided below). They could select one line from the poem as a title and create a star, using natural materials, to illustrate or represent the line from the poem.

As a piece of writing the children could write a similar poem themselves using the same tagline as Joy O'Pateng, A Star that....

A Star

Above the clouds there is a star
A star that looks down on me
A star that I makes my wishes shine
A star that brightens my path
A star that enlightens my world
A star that makes me feel loved
A star that makes me dreams come true
A star that breaks my loneliness
A star that makes me smile
A star that I up to and not down on
A star that protects me from my enemies
A star that brings my bliss and hope
A star that sticks to its promises
A star that supports me take me as I am
A star that never fades away...
A star that will live with me forever and ever.....

Joy O'Pateng

Stars

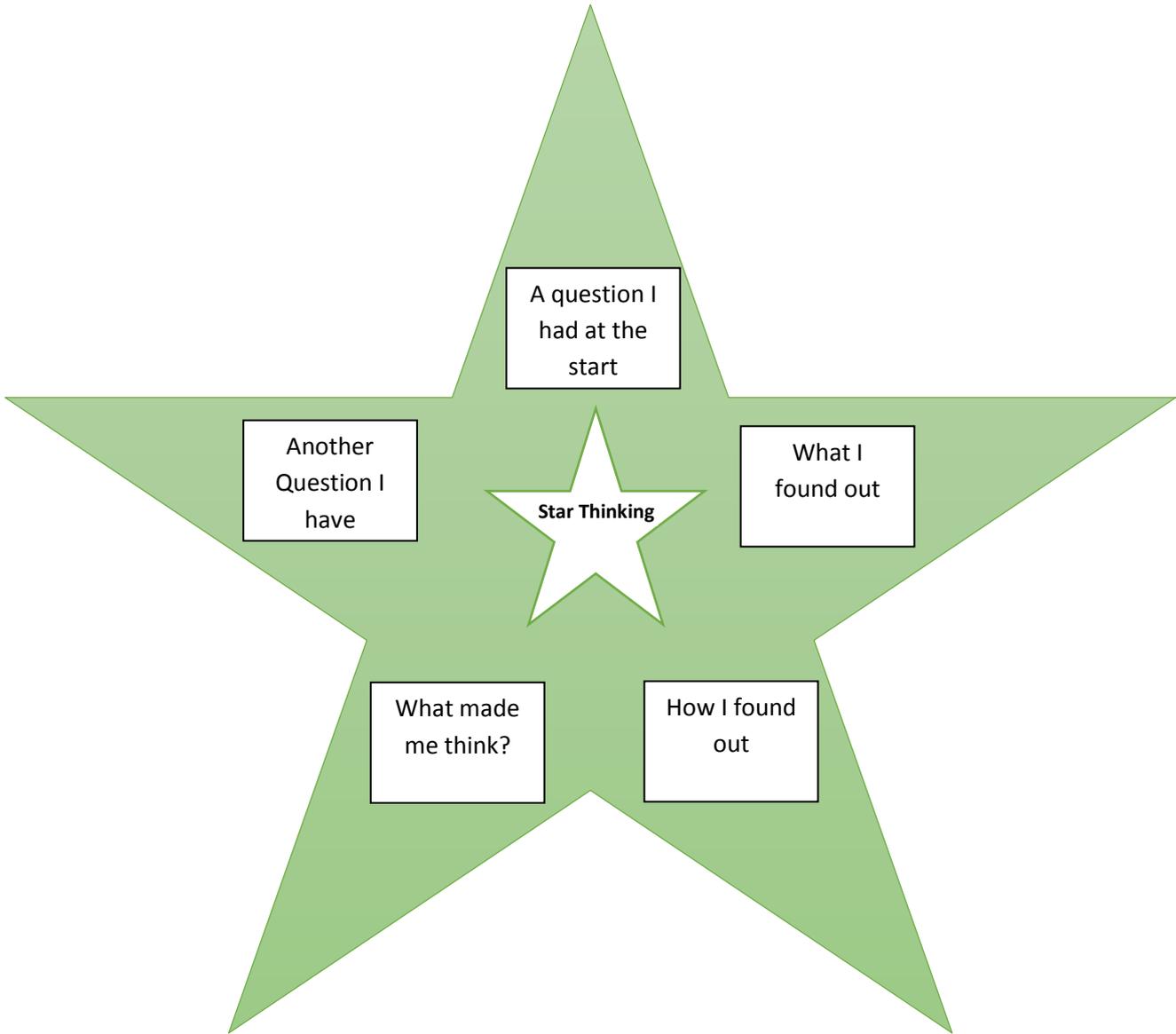
Look at the stars,
Way up there,
So very far away.
High in the sky,
They shine so white,
And never seem to stray.

Like little dots,
Or specks of paint,
Just floating up above.
I wonder,
What they do up there,
And what they are made of.

Are they just holes,
Poked out the sky,
By giants long ago?
Or maybe they're,
Electric lights,
Strung up to make a show!

So far up there,
I'd like to be,
To take a look first hand.
To just get close,
And have a peek,
That really would be grand!

Gareth Lancaster



A question I
had at the
start

Another
Question I
have

What I
found out

Star Thinking

What made
me think?

How I found
out

Study 2 – Lightning

Lightning is possibly the first experience of fire that man had...lightning striking a tree and causing it to burn. The children could research how lightning happens.

We either love lightning or hate it! The teacher should lead the class in a session discussing the emotions we have around lightning. They should consider the things they do when there is lightning. They could write sentences to describe their experiences of lightning, for example:

- What they do?
- What they say?
- How they feel?

When they have written the sentences they can investigate how to cut words and phrases from them to make better descriptions or to create the lines of a poem.

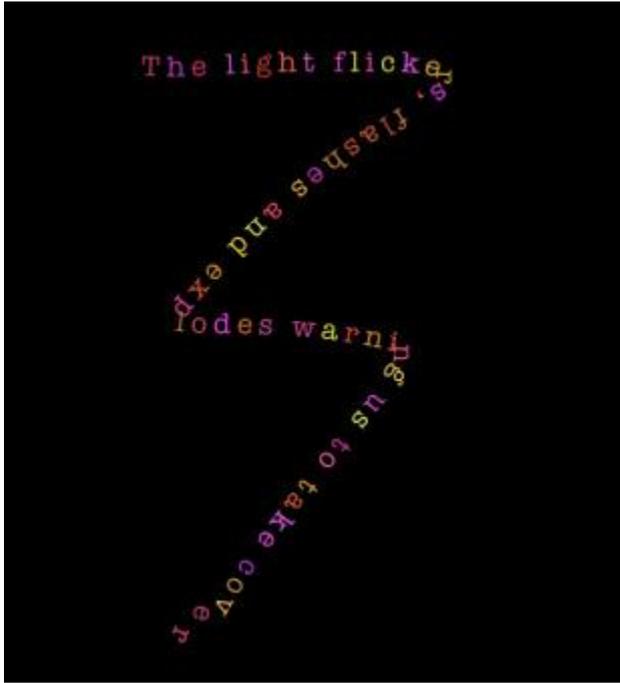
Extension: Artwork

The children could explore all the ways that they could create lightning flashes. Using card, plastic, paper and fabric. They could cut out bolts of lightning and use them to make a display. Poems or written work could be displayed on the pieces.

Opportunity for Writing 3

The children could write a concrete or shape poem based on class brainstorming and discussion about the subject of lightning. The children could brainstorm some elements of the sentence, for example; some appropriate verbs and adjectives to describe what the lightning is doing.

Here's an example to help:



Opportunity for Writing 4

To extend the idea of fire and early man this poem by Christina Rossetti could be read and discussed...the children could consider how flint is precious and how it 'holds fire'. The children could try ways of making fire...rubbing sticks and knapping flint.

Flint

~Christina Rossetti

An emerald is as green as grass,
A ruby red as blood;
A sapphire shines as blue as heaven;
A flint lies in the mud.

A diamond is a brilliant stone,
To catch the world's desire;
An opal holds a fiery spark;
But a flint holds fire.

The children could pretend to be Hunter Gatherers or early men and women and they could write about their experience of creating fire.

Study 3 - Volcanoes

Activity One – Where in the World?

To introduce this activity the teacher should ask the class if they know anywhere in the world where there is a volcano. Perhaps children will have heard about the volcano in Iceland which disrupted air travel by erupting in April 2010. The children could view film clips online to show the volcanic ash plume coming from this volcano and spreading across Northern Europe. They should locate the volcano on maps, globe and online maps and in atlases.

The teacher could also provide a map of volcanoes in the Ring of Fire. Over 75% of the world's volcanoes and the most active volcanoes are located in the Pacific Ring of Fire. Maps of this phenomenon can be viewed online.

It is estimated that there are approximately 1,500 active volcanoes in the world today. A volcano is called active if it has erupted in the last 10,000 years.

Use Google or similar search engine and search map of volcanoes this dynamic planet interactive map.

All the volcanoes of the world can be viewed on this map. By zooming in on the map of the earth you can locate volcanoes by clicking on a volcano symbol you are given the name of the volcano and some interesting facts such as its height and when it last erupted.

In groups children could select a few of the volcanoes nearest to their country or in a particular area. They could begin with the brief facts they are given on the interactive map and then research further data about selected volcanoes.

The children could also locate the volcanoes they study in atlases, on world maps or by using Google earth or similar.

Extension – Exploring Etna

One of the closest and the most active volcanoes in Europe is Mount Etna on the island of Sicily.

The children should have time to explore Etna and to find out about its recent eruptions. Online images are available and information about its recent eruptions is easily sourced. The children could compile a timeline using information and images of the eruptions over the last 100 years.

Information regarding these eruptions is easily sourced online.

On the site www.volcanolive.com a comprehensive list of eruptions in the last 10 years is available.

Activity Two- Volcano Art

Some lovely images can be found of Etna erupting. Especially images of the September 2007 eruptions which can be found using a search engine.

Short clips of this eruption are available online as well.

The children could view the pictures or clips and decide how to replicate the images.

They could try to recreate the images using a variety of resources. They could then compare their work with the real images and decide which materials allowed them to recreate the most accurate likenesses of the eruption.

The children could pick from resources including;

- Black card
- Charcoal
- Paint
- Coloured paper or fabric
- Crayons
- Pastels
- Various types of paper

From the images of Etna 2007 eruption the predominant colours for use are black, orange, yellow and red.

Similarly the children could recreate the images connected with the Icelandic volcano which are of whites, greys and light blues or black.

They could compare and contrast the images and select materials or processes to allow them to recreate images similar to those they source.

Then the children could combine their two processes to help them create an image of a volcano like that displayed in the work "Eruption of a Volcao" by Lajos Mezey.

This painting has two distinct areas, a dark area and a light area. The children could discuss the contrast of these two areas of the painting and try to recreate similar paintings of erupting volcanoes.

Opportunity for Writing 5

The children could use all their learning about volcanoes as the basis for writing workshops.

They could focus on certain parts of speech for this, verbs and adverbs would be ideal.

The children could brainstorm a range of verbs which describe the eruption of a volcano.

These could include words such as: exploding, hissing, blazing, burning, spurting, spewing, smoking, shooting... etc. The children could use dictionaries and a thesaurus or online search engines to build and extend their vocabulary. They could also brainstorm a set of adverbs such as; brightly, dangerously, spitefully, fiercely...etc. Then they could use the words to create list or shape poems they could write these in groups or as individuals.

As a stimulus for this work the children could watch some of the clips of volcanoes erupting.

Opportunity for Writing 6

To extend the previous activity the children could write short descriptive pieces about a volcano erupting. They could try to include adjectives, similes and metaphors to enhance their writing.

The teacher could lead the class as they pick things which the volcano can be compared to, for example:

- An animal
- A vehicle
- A river

The children could then think of appropriate similes or metaphors, such as:

The volcano is;

As angry as a raging river

As fierce as a charging lion

As strong as rolling bulldozer

Or

The volcano is;

A raging river

A charging lion

A rolling bulldozer

NOTE At the end of each section or throughout the theme the teacher should help the children consider the positive and negative aspects of fire. In this session they have explored the necessity for fire for our lives...the positive aspect. They have also seen the negative power of fire in that it can destruct. The children should have time to think about discuss and record their thoughts on this paradox.

Section 2 Things we Light or Set on Fire!

In this part of the Unit the teacher and children will use a variety of things which we light as the stimuli for their study and work. Throughout the section the teacher should help the children to consider further the fact that there can be a positive and negative side to all aspects of fire. The things which could be explored or used as stimuli include:

- Candles
- Lamps
- Fireworks
- Bonfires
- Torches
- Fires in the home- the hearth
- Furnaces to fire ceramics, to melt metal and to create glass

The children could study these things to see how we use them or derive benefits from them. For example how through time man has made light and had heat from fire in a variety of forms. They could consider all of the benefits we get in life from something as simple as a naked flame. They could create timelines to depict how man has harnessed and used naked flames down through History...for the good. From early examples of torches and food cooked on fires to man making electricity by burning fuels to create heat and light.

They could also contrast and create a timeline for times when fires were negative events in History such as The Great Fire of London.

They could also explore how the use of coal, oil and gas as fossil fuels has had a negative impact on the environment. To do this they could create Power Point Presentations or similar to show how destructive fire can be and its subsequent impact and effect.

The children could research how candles are made from beeswax. They could investigate what types of fat are used by tribes around the world to make their candles.

The children could make their own candles by dipping wax.

The children could investigate how candles are made and they could try making their own. There are many candle making kits available to buy.

The children could use their learning then as the basis of art, dance and writing work.

They could move like flickering flames on a candle in solo pieces and then combine and work in groups to form torches or bonfire dances together.

The children should be helped to understand how man has been able to 'contain' fire and use it as energy. They should also be helped to understand the dangers associated with fire too and that containment is not always possible...or that disaster can strike.

Opportunity for Writing 7

The children could further develop some work on the Great Fire of London. To do this they could find out a little about the fire and how it started. They could consider if it was a positive or negative event since it destroyed so much but also helped eradicate the plague.

The children could look at some of the paintings which have been made as a record of the fire. Such as this one by an unknown artist or the second one which is by Jan Griffier.



The children could make pictures to depict the fire by drawing buildings etc and by superimposing 'flames' painted onto plastic or similar. They could compare and contrast the different styles of paintings of a city on fire by looking at this composition by Ann Marie Bone called Fire in the City (below). The children could use the pictures as the basis of descriptive writing entitled... 'On Fire'.



Using strips of foil which they could paint with PVA Glue and paints the children could make collage style paintings of cities or towns on fire. They could use images of their own town or locality and superimpose flames made with plastic painted or foil painted. They could use a variety of media, such as ink or paint and tools such as spreaders or painting knives to recreate similar images to those of Ann Marie Bone.

The children could create a palette of colour for a painting of a city on fire or alternatively create a paint range called 'On Fire'. For this they could paint strips of card like those which are found in paint stores or DIY outlets.

Opportunity for Writing 9

The children could consider the emotions of people caught up in the Great Fire of London. They could write imaginary diary accounts of an eye witness or create modern day news reports of the event. Alternatively they could write a piece for a Town Crier of the time to report on the event.

The home and the Hearth

In this part of the Unit the teacher could help the children explore how important the hearth is in any home. They could look at how homes have traditionally been built around the fire which was the primary source of heat and where the cooking was done.

The hearth has also been the place of gathering and of storytelling. The hearth and the stories he learnt around it from his Grandmother was an important source and muse for

Pushkin as a writer. It was at the hearth that he learned the Russian fairy tales and folktales from which he borrowed characters and upon which he based some of his own works.

The children could think about how from early times up until the invention of the television the hearth was the place where the entertainment went on inside the home.

Opportunity for Writing 10

The teacher could read the poem, 'Armies in the Fire' by Robert Louis Stevenson to the children. There should be time to discuss the image as created by this poem of a marching army in the flames of a fire. The children could then think about, discuss and brainstorm their own ideas for the things they see reflected in a burning fire. To stimulate the children's thinking they could watch and discuss the following clip on You Tube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8LUCbRKIYM> or search '8 hours of fireplace with crackling fire sounds'.

Extension Work

The poem could also be used as the basis of a dance to express the movement of the flames and of the army. Alternatively the children could try to illustrate the poem or make illustrations of what they imagine to be seen within a fire.

ARMIES IN THE FIRE

The lamps now glitter down the street;

Faintly sound the falling feet;

And the blue even slowly falls

About the garden trees and walls.

Now in the falling of the gloom

The red fire paints the empty room:

And warmly on the roof it looks,

And flickers on the back of books.

Armies march by tower and spire

Of cities blazing, in the fire; —

Till as I gaze with staring eyes,

The armies fade, the lustre dies.

Then once again the glow returns;

Again the phantom city burns;

And down the red-hot valley, lo!

The phantom armies marching go!

Blinking embers, tell me true

Where are those armies marching to,

And what the burning city is

That crumbles in your furnaces!

Containing Fire to Create

In this part of the Unit the children could study the use of fire in the process of manufacturing metal, ceramics or glass. They can research how fire is used and what happens to each of the materials as a result of heat.

Opportunity for Writing 11

They could write a descriptive piece of writing based on the experience of one of the materials when it is heated. For example how it changes form and shape and can be manipulated and is flexible and can be moulded. They could try to express how the material is limited when solid but fluid and flexible...creative and malleable as a liquid.

Alternatively they could write a poem using short descriptive phrases to outline the process they have been exploring. They could watch clips such as:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0F8QefQ5NiQ

This clip shows how a small glass pumpkin is made. The children could describe the process and the little pumpkin created by it. They could think of things to make and design new ideas of objects that could be made from glass.

Extension Work

Similar written work could be done for metal or for ceramics being fired in a kiln. The children could make their own little clay pots or tea light holders. They could brainstorm adjectives to describe the clay before and after it has been kiln dried or glazed. They could use the adjectives collated to create poems.

Section 3 Emotions and Fire

Finding your fire within!

This is a major aspect of this section of the theme...based on Sir Ken's Robinson's assertion that we all need to find our element, our passion and basically...do it!

The children should have time to think about and discuss their passion...their fire!

They should consider what inspires and motivates them. They could then express these things in a variety of ways. For example:

They could visually express this by creating a collage of their own drawings, paintings or images they have printed.

They could write to explore what their fires and passions are in prose or in poetry.

The children should consider ...how will they be a 'coal' or a 'burning ebony'? What could they do to express the fire within themselves.

Emotion

One of the petals of the Pushkin Four Petalled Flower is the petal of the 'Emotion'. No Pushkin theme is complete without the balance of exploring and expressing our emotions.

Within this theme there should be ample time given to this aspect of the work. Emotions are 'fires' within us. Like all other aspects of this theme there are two sides...the positive and the negative. Both sides should be remembered and drawn on equally.

The teacher should ensure that no uncomfortable experiences or emotions are brought up...everyone should be comfortable and confident about what they choose to share or to use as the stimuli for writing or other creative works.

One way to get the discussion started is through use of artwork.

Here are a few good discussion starters:

- The first painting is called Emotions, by Melanie Alcantara Correia



The children could consider what has happened to the person in the painting for them to have all the different reactions. Then they could think of themselves and write 'labels' for each of the faces noting a time when they felt that emotion for themselves.

The children should also see these emotions as being either contained and positive or not contained and negative. They should explore what these uncontained emotions can lead us to do. They should have opportunities to explore conflict and conflict resolution solutions.

Opportunity for Writing 12

Using the painting as a stimulus the children could write an imaginary diary or journal account which tells the story of a day when they experienced all of these emotions.

They could brainstorm in groups all of the different emotions which could possibly be shown here. Next they could brainstorm the reasons for different emotions. Then they could match some of their ideas up and use them to create poems.

Opportunity for Writing 13

Focusing on the colours used the teacher could lead the class as they discuss and explore the connection between colours and emotions. They could consider if the colours are clues to the emotions displayed and again they could write about times when they have felt that colour or emotion.

To extend the work on colour and emotions the children could consider which colours could be used to 'pour' over a negative emotion to dilute or dispel it.

So the children think about being sad...then they consider which colours they would pour to wash that away...perhaps purple for joy or red for excitement.

These ideas could be collated by the children thinking, then sharing in pairs and then collating them in groups. They could then use these ideas to create pieces of prose or a poem. For example:

When I feel jealous... I pour the gold of contentment

When I feel sad...I pour the yellow of happiness

When I feel lonely ...I pour the purple of joy

Section 4 Mythology and Fire

There are many stories, myths and legends which the teacher may like to explore as stimuli to some work. These include:

The phoenix

The dragon

Prometheus who stole fire from the gods for man

These stories could form the basis of drawings, illustrations and paintings. They could be used to inspire imaginative narratives or poems.

Perhaps the children could create eBooks or adapted illustrated texts which they could then read and share with younger children in their school.

They could use a variety of materials to create images of the dragon or of the phoenix. They create colour ranges with these titles.

So they could make as many colours of orange, red, gold or yellow and paint these onto pretend colour cards like those found in DIY sections of a hardware store. They could give names to the colours and then use these names to create poems.