

USING THE AUDIO & PHOTOCOPIABLE ILLUSTRATIONS

THE AUDIO

The twelve episodes of *War with Troy*, and an interview with its two storytellers, are streamable from our website and can also be bought on three CDs. The total playing time of *War with Troy* is approximately three hours, with individual episodes varying in length from 9 to 17 minutes. Each episode starts with a woman's voice announcing the episode title, followed by a gong. A gong is also used to signal the end of each episode.

The episodes are themselves divided into two, three or four 'tracks'. This offers teachers the chance to plan pauses for discussion, questions, explanation, etc..

PREPARING CHILDREN TO LISTEN

In most classes children's experience of listening to the spoken word will vary, and some children may have had very little. It is therefore helpful if the process of listening to *War with Troy* is given status and explanation. Children may benefit from hearing an episode each, or every other day, over a concentrated period of 3-4 weeks. The listening experience can then become more vivid and stimulating, focused on understanding and identifying with the narrative rather than simply 'recalling'. Listening routines can also be established.

Learning to listen is an important element in the National Literacy Strategy and National Curriculum for English, as is an emphasis on opportunities for high quality talk and discussion. *War with Troy* offers the chance for both. It does so by building on established teaching principles that 'the most successful teaching' is:

- discursive – characterised by high quality oral work
- interactive – pupils' contributions are encouraged, expected and extended
- well-paced – there is a sense of urgency, driven by the need to make progress and succeed
- confident – teachers have a clear understanding of the objectives
- ambitious – there is optimism about and high expectations of success

The twelve episodes of *War with Troy*, each broken into tracks, offer ready-made lessons based on these five principles. The following guidance also helps manage classrooms for optimum listening and high quality responses.

- Make sure children can sit comfortably at their desk, or in a carpeted area, without disturbing other children or needing to fetch things. Listening to an episode and associated learning activities will take up to sixty minutes.
- If notes are not being taken, clear desks of paper, pens, etc..
- Test your player to see what volume setting is needed for all children to hear clearly. Tell children in advance how long an episode will last.
- Plan to avoid interruptions, either from within the class or by outside visitors. For instance, children who may need to leave the room can sit closer to the door, so as to slip out without a fuss.
- Warn adjoining classes that you will not be able to lend scissors, glue, books, etc. for a short period of time.

- Warn other visitors by putting a polite notice on the classroom door, telling them that you are listening to a story and should be disturbed only in an emergency.
- Ask children to be responsible for the above – it is part of heightening anticipation and excitement.

Such preparations are an important part of the planning process. They signal that significant listening and learning will be happening in the classroom, and that children and teachers can expect to enjoy this experience together.

Establishing a listening routine minimises distractions, while maximising concentration upon the events and language of the story. If the classroom is well organised, children's imaginations are then freed to devise individual images and personal interpretations of what they are listening to. These 'personal' interpretations are also taking place in a group: and the *group* nature of listening provides a forum to exchange, compare and extend 'personal' responses. Talking about characters, describing scenes, comparing emotions, imagining objects or events in the story: these help children to clarify their thinking. Children identify with the story and discover that *War with Troy* can simultaneously belong to them as individuals – whilst being at the centre of a significant and exciting group experience.

THE PHOTOCOPIABLE ILLUSTRATIONS

War with Troy has been developed in the oral tradition (see *Why this story*; *Sources for War with Troy*; and *The Creation of War with Troy*), with the aim of increasing children's capacity to listen, speak and imagine. Its language and narrative structure enable children to construct mental images in their mind's eye, of the events and characters described. This can be enhanced by the use of authentic visual images, fifteen of which are included in the *Teacher's Guide* and downloadable from this website. All but two of these are based on decorations from ancient Greek vases (see notes for individual episodes and *Sources for War with Troy*). The illustrations are presented as simplified line drawings for convenient photocopying, projection and comprehension.

At a general level they can be used to:

- improve children's observational skills
- develop children's ability to describe what they see
- encourage children's appreciation of the artist's style and expertise
- provide a starting point for children's own artwork

The illustrations can also be used to promote children's understanding of the main scenes and characters in *War with Troy*. For instance, when displayed on an overhead projector, they provide opportunities to:

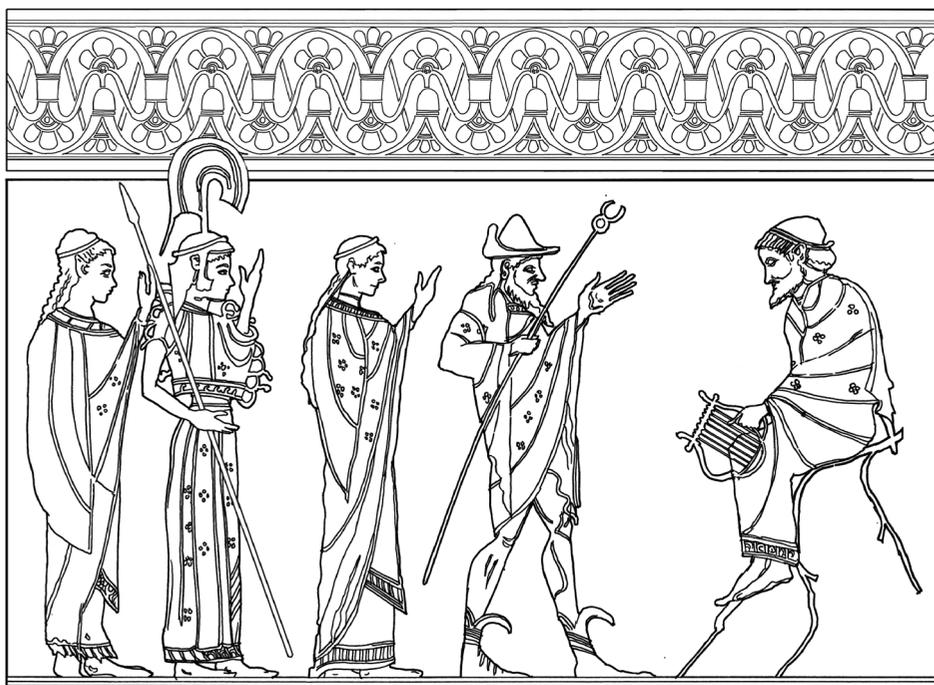
- review what has happened in the previous episode
- predict what will happen in the next episode
- imagine what characters in key scenes might be saying or thinking
- compare and contrast the artist's and the storytellers' representation of scenes and characters
- stimulate ideas for drama activities

Finally, the illustrations provide historical evidence for the Trojan War (see Sources for *War with Troy*), and can stimulate ‘historical’ questions. If so, it should be noted that almost all the illustrations are based on vases made at least 600 years after the Trojan War. They were decorated by craftsmen who lived in a very different world from that of the heroic age of the Trojan War. The vase painters re-worked Homer’s story to suit the medium in which they were working and to reflect their own understanding of scenes and characters. Taking this into account, teachers can use the ‘historical’ origin of the illustrations as a starting point for questions such as:

- What can we learn from these illustrations about the ancient Greek gods and goddesses? Ancient Greek warfare? Ancient Greek clothing and weapons?
- Are these illustrations proof that this story ‘really happened’?
- How and why did pictures from this story end up on vases made 700 years after the Trojan War?

SAMPLE ILLUSTRATION AND NOTE

Brief notes are provided for each photocopyable illustration. To help with duplication these notes have been kept separate from the downloadable illustrations and can be found on the webpage for each episode. The notes have information on the original source of the drawing, together with identification of characters, where possible, and key points for discussion. So, for example, **The judgement of Paris** (Episode 2):



Based on a vase from Vulci, c. 520 BC. British Museum, London.

On the right we can see Paris, ready to choose the winner of the golden apple. He is holding a lyre (linking him perhaps to Apollo, god of music as well as archery, and the protector of Troy). On his left stands Hermes, the messenger of the gods, who can be recognised by his staff, traveller’s hat and winged sandals. Hermes looks as though he is introducing to Paris the three goddesses on his left. Of the goddesses only Athene can be identified, by her snake-trimmed aegis (breastplate) and helmet; the other two are Hera and Athene.