

## 'A small dragon' by Brian Patten

### Classroom Activities

#### Opening Up....

- Listen to Brian Patten reading his magical poem [A small dragon](#)
- Imagine the wonders that might be hiding in ordinary, everyday places. The children might enjoy watching [Hagrid's dragon emerge from its shell](#) in his forest cottage!
- Watch what happens when [David Attenborough is left alone in the Natural History Museum!](#)
- Organise children into small groups and draw or brainstorm as many mythical/ pre-historic creatures as they can on one large piece of paper. How many creatures did they recognise from David Attenborough's short film? Are there any magical creatures that they can remember reading about in story books? Develop further by making into little [concertina books](#).

#### Climbing Inside....

- Consider as a group all the possible interesting places that a magical creature might choose to make a nest in our modern world. Points for the most creative. *Within the petrol cap of my Granny's rusty mini? Underneath the watering can in the middle of our allotment? Inside my leather school satchel?* Then consider where this creature might have originally come from. *The depths of an ocean-bed? The tips of a rainforest flower?* They could even add these ideas as text round their beautiful pictures already drawn into concertina books (above).
- Use Pupil Worksheet 1 to scaffold children's imaginative ideas for their chosen creature.
- Gather big paper, real maps, ribbons, craft materials, sticky stuff. The children can create a pictorial map illustrating the journey taken by their magical creature to its new nesting place. If drawing a map for Brian Patten's poem, there would be a marker by the forest where the dragon used to live and another marker locating the woodshed in the garden, where the dragon has taken up its new residence. A key might show the location of roots of stars, hazelnuts and dandelions (the dragon's chosen diet!). A dotted line might show the physical journey taken by the lumbering/ flying/ sliding magical beast!

#### Building Upon....

- Brian Patten's four line verses are quite irregular, but this can give scope for some exciting, unstructured versions of his original poem. I would strongly suggest that the first verse starts "*I found a...*", the second verse begins "*I fed it on...*" and the third verse starts "*It made a....*". The children can then use all their wonderful ideas from *Opening Up* and *Climbing Inside*.
- Older children might also like to think about what his final verse means. Who is the poet/ narrator talking to? Does the other person believe in magical creatures? The children might enjoy directing their inviting final verse towards a non-believer.
- Check out the rather brilliant [Literacy Shed](#). Lots of sparky ideas and short films to work with within the Fantasy genre. A Small Dragon could be the catalyst for a whole Fantasy adventure..!