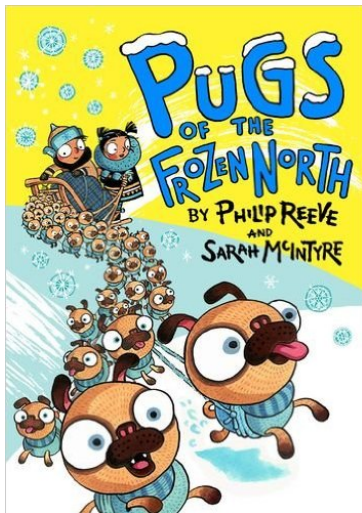


In the classroom: *Pugs of the Frozen North*

By Philip Reeve & Sarah McIntyre

From Claire Williams, Key Stage 2 teacher and Masters student in Critical Approaches to Children's Literature, University of Cambridge:

*I'm not sure whether you'll remember me - I was sat next to you at the Book Awards dinner in Nottingham and we talked about how *Pugs of the Frozen North* sounded like an exciting novel to use for the Polar Bear topic that I have to plan for the first two weeks of term with my Polar Bears class. Well, I've read it, I just know that the children will LOVE it and I have also decided that if we're going to get as much enjoyment out of it as it has to offer, it's going to need more than two weeks! I'm going into school tomorrow to turn my classroom into the North Pole and the novel is going to be at the heart of our topic for the whole first half of this term, which I think I'm going to call 'The Race to the Top of the World' ... I just wondered whether there is any chance that you and/or Philip might be able to spare a few minutes to come up with some sort of writing challenge based on *Pugs of the Frozen North*?*

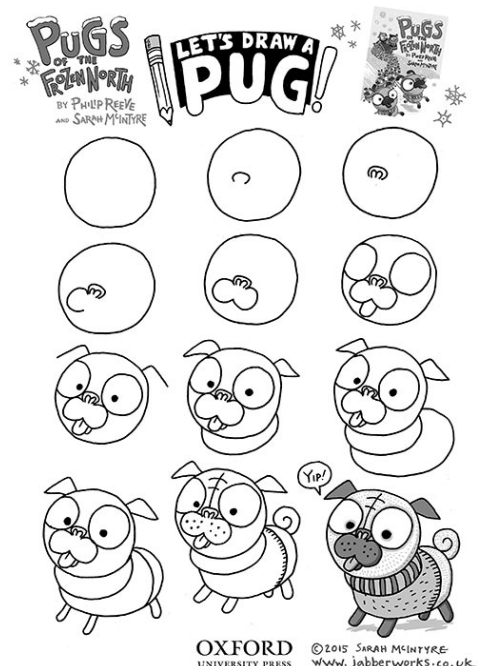


The Race to the Top of the World! It comes around once in a lifetime, and the prize? Your heart's desire. Shen and Sika can't resist the chance to win, but competition is fierce. The path to victory is littered with snow trolls, sea monsters, and a gang of particularly hungry yetis. But Shen and Sika have something the other contestants don't have. Actually, they have 66 other things; pugs to be exact. That's a 264 paw-powered sled. Let the race begin!

Draw a Pug!

Give your students confidence in character creation by making a pug out of simple shapes. It's much more fun to write about a character who looks back off the page at you! How you could build on this:

- Have everyone draw their pug on brown paper (such as parcel wrapping paper) in thick black pen. Give them pastels to make the whites of the eyes stand out and have each child design a different colour jumper for their pug. Have them cut out the pugs and display them on a class bulletin board.
- You could expand on this by having each child name his or her pug. Perhaps the child could write a paragraph about the pug's personality and



achievements, such as which sled races it's already taken part in. Cut out these text boxes and hang them next to each pug as part of the classroom display.

50 Kinds of Snow

In *Pugs of the Frozen North*, True Winter brings fifty different kinds of snow. With the class, create a list of all the kinds of snow mentioned in the book. Continue writing the list until the class reaches fifty, imagining what other sorts of snow might exist in True Winter.

How you could build on this:

- Divide up the snow: Write the fifty kinds of snow on slips of paper, fold them, and have each child draw a piece of paper from a hat to decide which kind of snow each child will focus on for his or her project.
- Create a 50 Kinds of Snow class comic book: Each child creates a one-page comic strip. At the top of the page, they draw the title of their comic, which is the name of that particular kind of snow (Singing Snow, Shrink Snow, Farting Snow, Giggle Snow, etc).

Have the children think about what angle they want to take with their comic strip. Some ideas: a scientist could demonstrate how that kind of snow behaves. A pug could encounter the snow during Shen & Sika's race and have a mini-adventure which shows how the snow behaves. A snowball made of that kind of snow could be the main character in the comic. Or they could show what would happen if that kind of snow in their own school yard. (The possibilities are endless.)

If you'd like tips on how to make comics, Sarah McIntyre has created a series of comic-making videos for Booktrust. They're based on the Sea Monkey from *Oliver and the Seawigs*, but the same comic-making tips would apply to Pugs or any book or comic the children create.

<http://www.booktrust.org.uk/programmes/primary/the-write-book/sarah-mcintyre-video/>

The advantage of making comics is that the visuals will pull along the writing and make the overall book a more appealing object. There's also more of a chance that children would want to read each other's work if it's in comic form, and the kids would have to work on making their comics read clearly to each other.

Collect the comics into a book and add a title page, and possibly a short introduction. The introduction could include a one-line quotation from each child on their favourite thing about *Pugs of the Frozen North*, or a class book review. Look at the pug endpapers in *Pugs of the Frozen North* and create your own endpapers, possibly using scans or photos of the pugs the children have drawn. Or create more simple endpapers using white paint blobs (snowballs) on coloured paper; liven this up by giving each snowball eyes.

Create a cover and have the children come up with a blurb for the back cover. Include the children's names on the title page and on the page with their comic.

You could expand on this by having the class create a promotional book video trailer, and posters for the book.

- Make a class video about the 50 different kinds of snow. Each child presents a 'snowball' and introduces that particular kind of snow to the camera. Perhaps you cut away during each short talk to pictures or comics further illustrating the snowball's capabilities. Each child could also write out the name of that kind of snow for the camera to focus on before they begin talking.

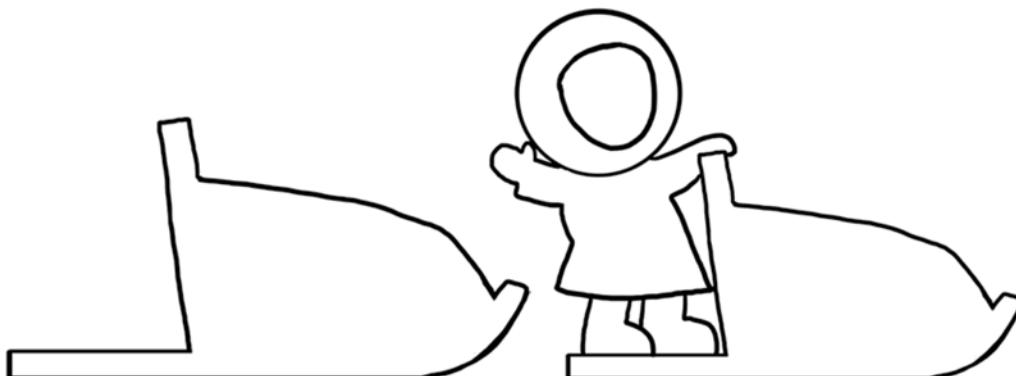
You can feature one kind of snow per child ('a selection of the 50 kinds of snow in Pugs of the Frozen North') or show all 50 kinds. If you want to make the video public on YouTube or Vimeo and there are privacy issues, the children without video permissions could do voice-overs while the camera focuses on their snowball and artwork.

The Great Sled Race

Create a Great Sled Race mural on a bulletin board or long strip of paper.

Have each child decide what sort of creature (real or mythical) will pull their particular sled, and how many of these creatures they will need to pull their sled. Have them draw the creature in the top of half a piece of paper and write a short paragraph beneath it, explaining what kind of creatures are in their team, why they think their team is best suited to win the race, and what they have packed in their sled. (This can be serious or jokey.) Make sure the children's creatures are facing toward the right-hand side of the paper (so everyone's sled will be going in the same direction).

Have the child go over the outlines of their creature drawing in dark black pen. Cut off the lower half of the paper with the article on it and save this. Have the child trace over the first drawing to create multiples of that creature. (If their team has four dragons, trace over the first dragon three times.) Have them colour their team in bright colours and cut out the creatures. Get them to create a sled out of coloured paper. (This could be as simple as a rectangle, or one of these shapes):



For an extra challenge, children could create harnesses for their creatures and draw on coloured paper a picture of themselves riding their sled. For younger children, you could cut around the second shape, glue a headshot photo of the child into the parka hood, and have the child decorate the sled, parka, mittens and boots. A bit of decorative ribbon might make a nice belt. Patterned origami paper might make eye-catching sled blankets.

Create a bulletin board with a coloured background (blue?) and display the sled teams and sleds on the board. Use thread, string or narrow ribbon to connect each sleds to its creatures. Next to each sled, attach the short paragraph the child has written about his or her sled team.

If you have space, have the children cut snowflakes out of paper and add them to the picture. Perhaps you could add a title along the top of the display, such as 'Race to the Top of the World!'

In *Pugs of the Frozen North*, the pugs say 'Yip!' and 'Arooo!' You could create speech bubbles for the children's creatures with the sounds their various creatures make while they're racing.

Take a photo (or photos) and tweet it to Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre at @philipreeve1 & @jabberworks!

Polar Board Game

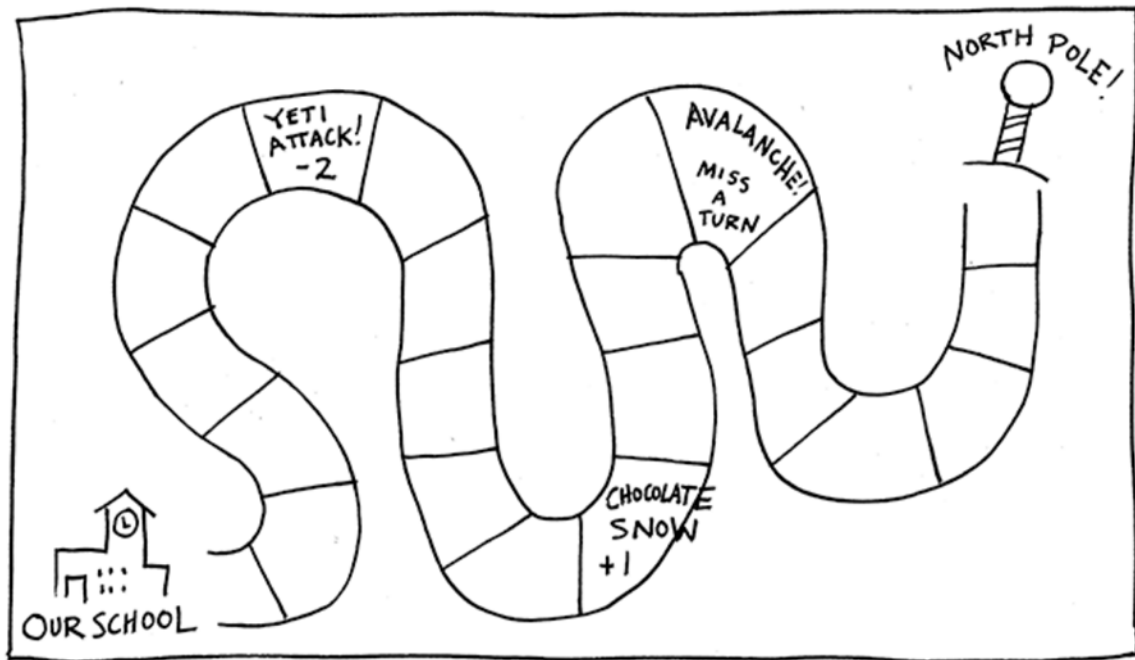
Create a giant board game, adding wonders and perils from the book and inventing some of your own!

Part 1: You'll need a large piece of paper, possibly a roll of paper or paper covering a display board. In the bottom left corner, create the starting point (possibly the name of your school). In the top right corner, draw the North Pole (perhaps an actual pole, with a label reading 'North Pole').

Part 2: Draw a curvy track (two parallel lines) connecting the two points, to form a game board race course. Divide the track up into boxes (like a railroad track).

Part 3: Talk about wonders and perils in the book. What might racers meet along the way, which would either help them or hinder them in their journey? You can debate the merits of each (Fart snow might set you back three squares because it's horrible, or propel you two spaces forward.) Examples include encountering yeti, avalanches, the Kraken, crevasses, polar bears, Northern Lights, snowstorms, ice palace mirages. You can either write or draw onto the game board the different wonders/perils or have the children do it.

The class can decide together if each encounter means going forward or backward (and how many squares... -2? +4?) or missing a turn (or some other penalty, possibly a funny one). Write these directions onto the game board.



Part 4: Create two paper markers with blu-tack on the back of each (possibly using a pug face from the Draw-a-Pug activity or a sled from the Great Race activity). Divide up the class into two teams. Select a person from each team to roll the dice for that team (or take it in turns). Have each team roll the die to see who goes first, then play the game!

Part 5: Discuss with the children how creating a board game is very much like plotting out a story: there's a beginning, and end, and events and setbacks that happen to the characters in the middle.

Consider having each child create his or her own board game as a way of plotting out a story. Have the children choose a starting point, a finishing point, and decide what they (or their character) might encounter between those two points. Then get them to tell or write the story as though they're playing the game they've created.

Heart's Desire

If you could win the Great Race and get your heart's desire, what would it be?

Part 1: Have the children write the answers to these questions. They may feel very private about these answers and not want to share them with the class.

1. What would you want more than anything?
2. What do you think someone else in your family would want more than anything?
3. Is there anything you feel you ought to ask for, even if it's not what you really want?
4. What would happen if you got your heart's desire? Would it make you happy, could it cause problems, or both?

Part 2: The children could use these answers to inspire a story, showing a character who gets his or her heart's desire, how getting this might make things go wrong, and then showing what they'd do (or not do) to make it right again. The story could be in comics form or in writing with illustrations. They could be serious or silly-surreal stories, depending on how they want to approach the subject.

Further 'Frozen North' reading:

The White Darkness by Geraldine McCaughrean

The Call of the Wild or *White Fang* by Jack London

Shackleton's Journey by William Grill

Moominland Midwinter by Tove Jansson

Northern Lights by Philip Pullman

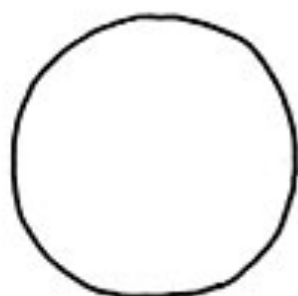
**For more free book-related activities,
visit Sarah McIntyre's website:**

www.jabberworks.co.uk

PUGS
OF THE
FROZEN NORTH
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