



Football Fiesta

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Teaching Guide

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RATIONALE & THEMES

Joe, Craig, Ajit, Kim and Jess, all unremarkable athletes, have been scouted for a mysterious residential sports academy.

The programme they undertake is like no other they have seen and involves them in a global maritime dash to avoid the gaze of rivals who are attempting to pirate the methods of the academy.

The story culminates in a 'winner takes all' clash with a competing academy where their skills must face the challenge of a biased and seemingly impossible test.

The themes explored are:

- Friendship
- Success
- Loyalty
- Separation
- Elitism
- Sportsmanship

SUMMARY

Joe, Craig and Kim are all well acquainted with humiliating performances in their respective sports. After another ignominious defeat they are surprised to find themselves scouted by a mysterious representative for a secretive sporting academy.

Discussions with their parents successfully completed, they meet at dawn on a windswept pier where they are joined by two more companions, Ajit and Jess, as they make rushed preparations for a mysterious rendezvous in the middle of Clew Bay.

The enchanted island they seek emerges from the depths of the bay and they embark. However, before they can establish their bearings, they are ushered underground and the island is hurriedly submerged.

Through the airlock, the children are led through a labyrinth of passages to meet their host, Luce, who welcomes them and assigns their living quarters, explaining that the

island is in fact a huge submarine plotting a course to avoid detection by rivals.

A programme of skill development and nutrition has been carefully prepared for them to develop their individual talents to world-champion level.

The strict daily regime begins to show results while they try to evade the spying of a rival who seems to be able to unerringly anticipate their position.

Racing across the Atlantic, they find themselves in the humid heat of the Amazon where they must stand and face a 'winner takes all' contest with the rival who has dogged their journey since they left Clew Bay.

APPROACH

This entertaining story offers many opportunities for the class to examine the value of sport and the quest for success.

The themes will help to develop class discussion supporting some of the themes presented in the PSHE / PDMU programmes.

This guide has divided the story into three sections and the activities offer suggestions on developing the themes.

Section 1 Atlantis Pages 7 - 75

SUMMARY

Another dismal soccer display leaves Joe feeling dispirited and seeking the quickest route to the changing room after the final whistle.

When asked to wait behind with his parents after the rest of the team leave, he fears the worst. However, his curiosity is engaged when the coach introduces the tall, mysterious stranger Joe had noticed during the game.

Similar dramas unfold elsewhere for Craig and Kim after equally unfortunate performances at tennis and rugby until they all find themselves huddled on a cold, dark quay, joined by Ajit and Jess waiting to embark for a trip to an island sporting academy.

Slightly disturbed by the urgency to avoid detection, the small group are escorted quickly onto a small boat by an elderly seaman and make a hurried cast-off from the quay into the choppy waters of the bay.

Daydreaming, Joe remembers the awkward midnight farewell to his parents as the taxi collected him with little information from either of them about his destination.

With dawn streaking the sky, the boat heaves gently and the children are stunned to see a huge island surface from the Atlantic swell.

They scramble ashore and find the island deserted, except for a single isolated cabin.

When the old seaman eventually unlocks the cabin door and leads them inside, their senses are almost overwhelmed.

They're on a huge submersible complex disguised as a deserted island. The boatman identifies himself as the author of their adventure introducing them to Calvin, who will look after them, before he leaves and the island submerges.

The group are assigned to their quarters and must wait until morning for detailed instructions. Then their mentor, Luce, outlines that the purpose of the institution is to help them realize their potential as elite athletes.

She gives them a tour of the facilities that will be at their disposal, outlining the commitment that will be expected from them.

That night, struggling to sleep, Joe decides to explore. He discovers that the island has surfaced, and notices some unexplained lights in the darkness.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- (**Read p9**): Robbie, the team captain makes a point of encouraging Joe despite his performance. Why did he do this? What example of leadership did he give to the team? Why is this not a common occurrence in sport?
- (**Read p47**): Luce explains that the purpose of the academy is to make the pupils the very best that they can be. Is this really a healthy ambition for anyone? Why must you try to be better than you are? How would you know when you were finally the best that you could be? Is it a goal that can never be reached?
- (**Read pp69**): Luce explains how their statistics can confirm what is the ideal body shape for success in any sport. Should sporting participation always be to achieve success? What can you enjoy from sport if you don't have the ideal body shape to be successful? Why is it so important to win when you are involved in sport?
- (**Read p18**): Craig is seriously considering giving up tennis because he has had of a series of humiliating defeats. Is this a reasonable reaction? Can competition ruin the enjoyment of participation? Is sport a healthy environment if the fun in taking part depends on beating your opponent?

ACTIVITIES

1. The Black Hat (**Read p8**)

Joe's attention is drawn to the tall stranger in the black hat, watching the game from the sidelines.

Create an illustration of him that adds a sense of mystery to his description.

2. Rubbish (**Read pp15-16**)

After a match full of negative comments, Kim's coach continues his tirade in the clubhouse.

However, he is overheard by one of the parents who decides to write a polite letter to him pointing out the impact that his comments may have on the girls and explaining that playing sport is about more than simply winning.

Can you write her letter and then compose his reply?

3. Opportunity (**Read pp31 & 65**)

The coaches have been tasked with securing parental consent for the children to attend the academy.

It is a very difficult decision for the parents and they have many questions.

An information sheet has been prepared to reassure them. It has three main reasons outlined why they should agree and five short Q&A responses to the most common questions.

Make a copy of the sheet that they were given.

4. Leap Island (**Read P36**)

The old man very briefly outlines some of the legend of Leap Island and the mysteries that are associated with it.

Remembering that he had picked up a tourist leaflet lying on the quay, Craig searches in his pocket to discover that it explains the legend in greater detail, including maps and illustrations.

Make a copy of the leaflet.

5. Don't Eat it (**Read p57**)

A healthy diet is important whether you are an athlete or not and the Atlantis Academy canteen has a great selection of healthy foods to choose from.

Draw a large triangle and use two horizontal lines to divide it into three layers.

In the bottom layer write all the foods you eat a lot of, in the middle layer, the foods you eat some of and in the top layer the food you only eat a little of.

Is your diet a healthy one?

Plan a healthy menu of meals and snacks for yourself for next week.

parkchildcare.ie/food-pyramid-for-1-5-year-old-children/
[youtube.com/watch?v=0KbA8pFW3tg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KbA8pFW3tg)

6. Ice Breakers (**Read pp47-53**)

As part of their introduction to Atlantis, Luce asks each of the students to present a short background on themselves, explaining who they are, why they think they have been selected, what they hope to achieve during their stay and their initial impression of the facility.

Make a copy of what each of them said.

7. Qualities (**Read p60**)

Each of the scouts has been given detailed instructions on what qualities to look for in the children they selected.

They were told to look for four essential qualities and two desirable qualities. The qualities were listed in order of preference and each included a brief example to help them to recognize it.

Make a copy of the quality identification sheet they were given.

8. Mum (**Read p62**)

Before his phone was confiscated, Craig managed to send a short email to his mum.

He is excited about the academy; however, he doesn't want to worry her needlessly with all the detail.

What sort of information might he share with her?

Make a copy of the email that he sent.

Section 2 Spied On Pages 76 - 155

SUMMARY

The first full day of their programme sees the group receive a thorough physical examination and an introduction to gymnastics in order to develop core flexibility and strength.

Luce reveals that she is aware of Joe's nocturnal exploring and promises them another more detailed tour. Then she leaves and Joe fields questions about what he witnessed from the observation platform.

Joe recalls seeing strange lights as he watched the storm and when he mentions it to Luce, the security footage is reviewed revealing they are being shadowed by a drone.

School lessons continue, including a riveting maths lesson followed by a grand tour of the vessel and an invitation to enjoy their evening meal at the captain's table.

As his excitement subsides, Joe begins to feel homesick. However, a module on the science of striking a football entralls him.

As a treat, they are invited to the bridge to watch the vessel surface and are excited to learn that they have reached the Caribbean, where they are to pick up a famous cricket coach.

Finally getting the chance to practise their newly acquired football skills, the group whoop their way through the airlocks onto the outside surface to accept a challenge match against Calvin and Professor Kossuth, their football coach.

However, appearances prove deceptive and their aging opponents crush them 5-2, the game finally abandoned when the ball is kicked into the sea.

Their time out is disturbed when Joe spots the strange lights again and the island is forced to execute an emergency dive. A

drone is suspected and Luce reassures them that they are in no danger.

When they surface again the children are given the opportunity to go ashore for a day and a guided tour of one of the remote islands to experience Caribbean life.

Returning to Atlantis, a tracking device has been found in Joe's belongings and he is asked for an explanation.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- **(Read p78):** Joe recalls the excitement of the Olympic Games and how everyone tried to imitate the athletes. Why is this type of success so attractive for us? Why do we try to follow and copy someone else's triumph? How could this impulse be used to encourage us to buy things we don't need? Why are so many successful athletes recruited for advert campaigns?
- **(Read pp96-97):** Looking at the Wall of Fame they realize that a great amount of money has been spent on developing the skills of a limited number of athletes. Should large amounts of money be spent on developing a small number of athletes? Could this money be distributed more widely for the benefit of a greater number whose skills levels will never be Olympic standard?
- **(Read p143):** When Craig grumbles about porridge for breakfast, Jess deflects his criticism with a light-hearted comment. Jess is an optimist and views things in a positive way. How do people like Craig influence the groups that they belong to? How would you recognize a pessimist and how could you restrict their influence on the group they belong to?
- **(Read pp 94):** Luce informs the group that some of the skills involved in playing chess can benefit participation in other sports. Which skills are transferrable between sports? Which is the most important skill that can be transferred between any sport and how can it be developed?

ACTIVITIES

1. Strength, Skill, Agility (Read p77)

Luce explains that gymnastics can help to develop skill in many sports as it promotes strength, skill and agility.

In a group, make a list of 15 sports and discuss how important each of these three attributes are for performance in that sport.

Draw a Venn diagram with 3 interlocking sets, one each for Strength, Skill and Ability.

Can you decide which sets each of your

sports can be assigned to?

Are there any sports that can be assigned to all three sets?

bbc.com/education/clips/zhckq6f

bbc.com/education/guides/zt7rk7h

2. I'll Buy That (Read p78)

Joe recalls how the attraction of the Olympic Games encouraged everyone to imitate their sporting successes.

This tendency is a very powerful tool that advertising uses to persuade us to buy things.

In groups, choose 5 famous sporting personalities from a range of sports and then make a collage of the different types of products that they advertise.

Can you summarize three main points that you notice from this research?

3. Living Together (Read pp87-88)

Joe suggests that Craig and Ajit should try to get to know each other as they will be sharing their accommodation for a long time.

Later that evening the group decide to create a list of five rules that they will try to follow to avoid disputes.

Can you help them to compile the list? Should the rules be the same for girls and boys?

4. Numbers (Read p90-91)

Their first maths lesson is fascinating and they discover lots of entertaining facts about the number 5.

Choose your own favourite number and try to discover five fascinating facts about it.

Present your research as a small illustrated poster.

Make a graph to show the favourite number preferences for your class.

britannica.com/topic/number-symbolism

5. Kicking (Read pp100-103)

Joe is amazed by the science and mathematics involved in kicking a ball.

That evening he decided to make a summary of what he learned from the class.

He decides that his summary will be a number of labeled diagrams as these will be easier for him to remember.

Can you help him to construct his summary?

6. The Fish Tank (Read p106)

Sitting in the control room watching the screens, the group realize that one of them is really a huge observation window and through it as the sunlight from the surface

filters and dapples, they can see all the marine life that surrounds them.

Create a framed window of what they saw using images and your own drawings.

7. The Bottles (Read p128)

Watching the others bobbing about in the water, Jess has an idea that she thinks will entertain everyone.

Explaining that because they are in the Caribbean, the Gulf Stream will eventually carry everything that floats back across the Atlantic to the shores of Ireland.

She suggests that each of them writes a message to themselves putting it into a bottle which they can throw overboard now and hopefully it will take four years to reach the West of Ireland when they expect to have graduated from the academy.

Make a copy of the letter that each of them wrote.

8. Dive Dive (Read p132)

Atlantis makes an emergency dive to avoid detection.

This was a frightening experience.

The author thought that he might include a short paragraph to describe the experience and the effect it had on them.

Can you help him to write the paragraph?

Section 3 Atlantis Pages 156 - 243

SUMMARY

Joe is relieved that he will face no sanction for the tracking device found sewn into his bag and the group are treated to an underwater viewing of an active volcano before they surface again to collect a world-famous cricket coach.

Their cricket instruction is interrupted when Luce explains that Victor has foolishly accepted a wager with his brother, Aston, who stole the blueprints for Atlantis to set up a rival academy and now their futures rest on them defeating Aston's team, Hy-Brasil in a football match.

Luce firmly dismisses Craig's initial reservations about the task and their training for the match swiftly moves into gear with practice, tactics and analysis lead by Professor Kossuth.

When Joe notices something odd about a bird that seems to be observing their practice session a little too closely, investigation

discovers a drone, disguised as a bird, to transmit their secrets to an unknown rival.

Victor's arrival by helicopter prompts a rematch of their original game against Professor Kossuth and Calvin, the score, to everyone's delight, confirming the progress that they have made.

With Victor remaining on board, the group get the opportunity to get to know him a little better as Atlantis reaches the rendezvous position on the Amazon.

Arriving first, they are able to acclimatize themselves before the Hy-Brasil craft surfaces, drenching them in a huge wave and shocking them with the height and strength of their opponents.

Reassured by the professor, and despite the blatant bias of the referee, Atlantis start the second half only a goal down.

Catching their opponents off guard, Atlantis equalize with a dazzling header from Joe and then take the lead with a combination play that leaves the goal player stunned.

Enduring the Hy-Brasil onslaught trying to equalize, the ball goes into the river in the dying seconds where it is shredded by a shoal of piranha.

The contest ends in debacle and their opponents leave. Atlantis claims the win, learning from Marta, one of the Hy-Brasil team, the extent of the cheating that their side employed.

The celebrations at the post match party are relaxed and joyful, however they have not heard the last of Hy-Brasil nor their rivalry.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- (Read pp164-165): Luce makes it clear that they expect each of the children to remain on Atlantis to complete their contracts, irrespective of how they feel about it. Is this fair? Should every benefit we get require gratitude in this way? Are Craig and Jess right to be annoyed at the lack of choice they now have?
- (Read pp169-171): Their soccer coaching involves practice with heading, albeit using sponge balls. Research now indicates that heading can cause long term brain damage. Should heading be banned for youth games? What other restrictions should be in place to avoid youth injury in other sports?
- (Read p191): On inspection, the 'bird' they shot out of the sky is revealed to be a drone that was spying on them. Drones are now in common use. Do they represent a threat to our privacy? What restrictions should there be on who can

own or operate one? Are they more of a nuisance than a real danger?

- (Read pp203-204): Victor explains how he got the idea to develop his academy. Could his money have been better spent to improve the lives of more children? Should anyone have the right to tell Victor how to spend his money? Should he share his secrets with his rivals so that lots of children can benefit or is Atlantis really a vanity project for him?
- (Read p240): Marta wanted to shake each of their hands before she left. Why are post-match rituals like this important? What are the players trying to express with this gesture? How would sporting events be affected if they were banned?

ACTIVITIES

1. Taller & Faster (Read p167-168)

Professor Kossuth explains that their birthday month can determine how successful a person might be at sport.

Test his theory by measuring, and comparing the heights of everyone in your own class.

You will need to create two groups, one with children whose birthdays are in the first six months of the year and the other for children whose birthdays are in the second six months, then find the average height for each group.

You could also find the average time it takes each of the groups to run the length of the playground.

Decide if there are any differences and whether they prove the professor's theory?

(Remember that the school admission year runs from July – June. Will this affect how you chose your groups?)

2. Greatest (Read p174-175)

Luce declares that Brazil is the greatest soccer nation, however their performance in the 2018 World Cup was poor.

What other countries might have a claim to this title?

In a group, decide which country you think should hold the title, then compile a fact-file of reasons and statistics to prove your case.

3. Missing (Read pp185-187)

When Joe speaks to his mum, she tells him that his old school have written to her to ask why he is not at school. This is a serious matter and when he mentions it to Luce she says that she will write an official letter to all their school principals to explain the absences.

What could she say to convince the principals that the children are safe and that their education is not suffering without divulging any of the secrets of Atlantis? How do you think that Luce might describe the school? What benefits do you think she would present to the headteachers? Can you help her to write the letters? How might the headteachers respond? Could you compose one of their replies? Do you think it would be a positive or a negative one?

4. Better Lives (Read p205)

Victor's aim is to enrich the lives of others.

However, Jess is not sure that supporting elite athletes is the most successful way to do this, and she is unsure how to contradict him.

Working in groups, help her prepare a response to his claim.

Research the three most effective things to do that will improve the lives of others explaining your reasons, then prepare it as a short PowerPoint with images for her.
unicef.org/environment/index_79764.html
unicef.org/emergencies/index_102358.html

5. Dissent (Read p206)

Craig is annoyed that the team have the responsibility to save Atlantis because of Victor's irresponsible wager with his brother.

He decides to write an anonymous letter of complaint and manages to pin to the notice board without being seen.

Make a copy of his letter and Victor's response.

6. The Kit (Read p221-222)

Everyone is thrilled with their new kit which includes a new badge and motto for the academy.

Although it is a team kit, each of the players has a slightly different design on their shirt.

Create an illustration of the new kit and explain the significance of the differences in the shirts.

7. Piranha (Read pp238-239)

The referee quivers in fear when he realizes that the river is teeming with these ferocious fish and begins to babble about an ancient Amazon legend concerning them.

From snatches of his rapid speech the children are able to recall an account of the legend.

Create a version of the legend that frightened him so much.