



## Inquire to Learn!

There are many ways in which *Puss in Boots/Fantastic France* can be used as a base for Inquiry Learning. This is just one suggestion.

## Session 1

Using the Big Book, share-read *Puss in Boots*, stopping at natural points for discussion. Draw on the students' prior knowledge of Puss in Boots, fairy tales and folk tales, and good and bad fortune.

### Possible Starter Questions for Discussion

**Puss in Boots:** *Who has heard of Puss in Boots? What can you tell me about the character? What can you tell me about the story? Does anyone know what country Puss in Boots comes from?* Some of the children may be familiar with the story of *Puss in Boots* while others may be familiar with the character from the Shrek movies. Discuss with the students that while in the movies Puss in Boots is a smooth-talking cat with a Spanish accent, the famous folk tale about Puss in Boots comes from France. Puss is what's known as a trickster character. Trickster characters are usually animals or gods who use their cleverness and cunning to play tricks and get around rules and normal behaviour.

**Fairy Tales, Folk Tales, and the Rule of Three:** *Have you ever noticed that characters and events in stories are often grouped in threes?* Brainstorm examples from Fairy Tales and Folk Tales, such as *The Three Little Pigs*, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, *Rata and the Waka* (StoryWorld 1), *The King and the Cobbler* (StoryWorld 1), *Marcela and the King's Tricks* (StoryWorld 2), *Dancing Across the Waves* (StoryWorld 4A). Tell the students that grouping

characters and events in threes is a writing technique often used in fairy and folk tales called the Rule of Three. It gives the story a rhythm or pattern and helps to build suspense. It also makes the story easier to remember, which is important as fairy and folk tales come from an oral tradition where the stories were originally told rather than written down. This is one of the reasons why there are many different versions of the same story. Say, *Look out for the Rule of Three in Puss in Boots.*

**Good and Bad Fortune:** *Do characters in folk tales usually get what they deserve? Is this always fair? Why/why not?* Discuss that in folk tales and other stories, characters with bad fortune are often rewarded for good or cunning behaviour. A good example of this is *Cinderella*, which was written by the same French author as *Puss in Boots* – Charles Perrault. Talk about how folk tales were stories for ordinary people. They were used to teach good behaviour. They were also used to entertain, inspire, and show that amazing things could happen to ordinary people.

### Text and Illustration Based Inquiry Questions

Cover: Look at the cover and read the title. Ask, *What do you think this story will be about? What do you think will happen?* Point out that Puss is a cat that wears clothes and can talk, which is an example of anthropomorphism – the literary technique of giving human characteristics, emotions, and behaviours to non-human things.

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Look at the cameo illustration on the title page and discuss that in the time that this story comes from (late 1600s) clothing and footwear were often used to judge how wealthy and influential a person was.

PP. 2–3: Revisit the text and illustrations and explain to the students that in the past it was normal for the eldest son to inherit everything a family had, with perhaps a little being left to the second son. Daughters and third or subsequent sons usually didn't inherit anything. Discuss that as the third son can no longer work in the family business he must make his own way in the world. Ask, *Is it fair that the boy has only a cat? Why/why not? Why do you think the cat has asked for a hat and boots? What do you think the bag is for? Discuss that the three sons is an example of the Rule of Three.*

PP. 4–5: Read the text and ask, *Were your predictions correct? Why do you think Puss in Boots is delivering presents to the king? Would the king have accepted presents from an ordinary looking cat? Why/why not? Who is the Marquis of Carabas?* Ensure that the students understand that Puss in Boots is pretending that his master (the boy) is a French nobleman. Share with the students that at the time that *Puss in Boots* was first written, France had a huge noble class and the king would not personally know all of the nobility. Check the students' understanding that a partridge is a bird that is hunted and eaten in France alongside other game, such as rabbits.

PP. 6–7: Review the first two paragraphs and ask, *How would the boy's life change if he were to "win" himself "a princess"? How would Puss in Boots' life change?* (Their social standing would improve greatly and with it would come wealth and luxury.) Ask, *Why does Puss in Boots tell his master to go swimming in the river without his clothes?* Ensure the students understand that if the king and the princess were to see the boy in his own shabby clothes, they would know that he wasn't a marquis. Ask, *What do you think is going to happen?*

PP. 8–9: Review P. 8 and ask, *How do you think the boy feels about being naked in the river when the*

*king and the princess pull up in their carriage? How about once he is dressed in fine clothing?* Continue reading and point out the adjective *clever*. Ask, *Why has the author described Puss in Boots as "clever"?* Remind the students that an adjective is a describing word and brainstorm other adjectives that could be used to describe Puss in Boots. Ask, *Why does Puss in Boots ask the farm workers to pretend that the land they are working on belongs to the Marquis of Carabas? Do you think they will do as he asks? Why/why not?*

PP. 10–11: Review the text and check the students' understanding by asking, *Why did the farm workers all follow the cat's instructions?* (They thought he must be magic so they were scared of him.) Ask, *Why does the king want to know who the land belongs to?* (He is trying to establish the wealth of the Marquis of Carabas.)

PP. 12–13: Revisit the first paragraph and ask, *Why has the author used the phrase "very impressed" three times?* (The author has applied the Rule of Three to the phrase to create a pattern and emphasise that the king, boy, and princess are all emotionally where they need to be in relation to each other for Puss in Boots' plan to succeed.) Discuss with the students that this is a point of transition from one part of Puss in Boots' plan to the next. Ask, *What is an ogre?* If necessary, tell the students that in folk stories an ogre is a hideous giant that eats people, especially babies and children. Ogres are known to be able to shape-shift into different creatures. They are also known to be vain. Ask, *How does Puss in Boots use what he knows about ogres to defeat the ogre?* Discuss that Puss in Boots knows that because the ogre is vain, he will not be able to resist showing off his shape-shifting skills. By challenging the ogre to turn himself into a very small animal, Puss in Boots is transforming his large, dangerous enemy into natural prey.

PP. 14–15: Review the text on P. 14 and ask, *What lesson can we learn from this?* (It can be dangerous to show off.) Continue reading and ask, *Why does the king suggest that the pair might like to marry?* (He thinks

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that because the boy appears to be very rich and belonging to the nobility and the princess clearly likes him, they would be a good match.) Ask, *Would the king have suggested this if he had known that the boy was the poor son of a miller?*

PP. 16: Finish reading and ask, *Are you happy with the conclusion? Why/why not? How has the boy been rewarded, despite his bad fortune at the beginning? How has Puss in Boots been rewarded? Is this fair? Why/why not? Why do you think the story of Puss in Boots has been popular for hundreds of years?*

## Further Discussion and Inquiry Extension

Share-read other stories from France, such as *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Red Riding Hood* (all by Charles Perrault); *Beauty and the Beast*; *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*; *The Stones of Plouhinec*.

Research to learn more about ogres and share-read (check the content first) other folk tales from around the world that contain ogres such as *Little Thumb* (Perrault, France), *Wise Anait and the Woven Words* (StoryWorld 2, Armenia), *Jack and the Beanstalk* (England), *The Kingdom of the Ogres* (China), *The Ogre's Feather* (Italy), *The Ogre of Rashomon/The Ogre's Arm* (Japan).

Invite the students to write stories about the further adventures of Puss in Boots. Does he travel around France working as an ogre killer? Does he join a circus or become an opera singer? Or does Puss in Boots become a famous French chef or clothing designer?

Organize the students into small groups to create short plays about an amazing thing happening to an ordinary person. Will it involve bad or good fortune? How will they entertain or inspire their audience?

Challenge the students to write their own story using the Rule of Three. They could have three characters, an event could happen three times, or they could use repetition in the text to create a pattern.

Invite the students to imagine that they could shape-shift into any animal or creature. What would they pick and why? Ask them to draw their new character or make a mask representing their new self.

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## Session 2

Using the Big Book, share-read ***Fantastic France***, stopping at natural points for discussion. Draw on the students' prior knowledge of France and French culture, monuments and war memorials, democratic government, museums, and sport.

## Possible Starter Questions for Discussion and Inquiry

**French Greeting:** *Does anyone know how to greet someone in French? It is bonjour during the day and bonsoir in the evening.*

**Cover and Contents Page:** Look at the cover of ***Fantastic France*** and ask, *Does anyone know the name of this monument? Can anyone tell me what*

*city it is in?* (Eiffel Tower, Paris) Point out the riverboats in the foreground and tell the students that the River Seine runs through Paris. Look at the contents page and point out the Eiffel Tower again in the background and the classic Parisian apartment buildings of uniform height and style built in cream-coloured stone. If any of the students come from France or have visited it, invite them to share their experiences.

**Location of France/Geography:** Reread the first sentence on P. 1 of ***Fantastic France*** and ask, *What is Europe?* If necessary, define Europe as a continent (one of the seven great landmasses on Earth). Look at the map on P. 1 of ***Fantastic France*** and note the

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location of France in Western Europe. Point out that France is the name of the country and Europe is the name of the continent that France is part of. Now look at a world map and find the location of France in relation to New Zealand/Australia. Tell the students that there are 50 countries in Europe, and France is the third largest in terms of area.

**French Culture:** *What is culture?* Discuss with the students that the word *culture* has several meanings. When we talk about French culture, we are talking about the general ideas, customs, and way of life of French people. Turn to PP. 4–5 of *Fantastic France* and review the text. Discuss that these symbols of France are examples of French culture. Now revisit the following sentence on P. 1: *It is famous for leading the way in food, culture, science, and fashion.* Ask, *What is meant by the word culture in this sentence?* Discuss that in this context, *culture* refers to the arts, such as dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. Then review the section on *The Louvre Museum* on P. 3.

**Monuments and War Memorials:** Turn to P. 2 of *Fantastic France* and reread the *Arc de Triomphe* section, pointing out the word *monument*. Ask, *What is a monument?* Discuss that a monument is a statue, building, or other structure that honours an important person or event. Point out that the Arc de Triomphe is a war memorial.

**Democratic Government:** *How do we choose our leaders?* Discuss that New Zealand and Australia are both democracies, where people vote in elections to choose their leaders. Point out that France is also a democracy, but it didn't used to be this way. Turn to P. 5 of *Fantastic France* and review the students' understanding of the section titled *The Power of the People*. Ensure that the students understand that the French Revolution led eventually to the development of a democratic French government.

**Museums:** *What is a museum and why do we have them?* Discuss that there are different kinds of museums where objects of historical, scientific, artistic, and cultural interest are stored and exhibited. We have museums so that experts and

the public can learn about and have access to a range of objects for education and/or enjoyment.

**Sport:** *What is sport? What is not sport?* Discuss that sport is any activity involving physical effort and skill in which an individual or team competes against others. There are many games in which people compete that are not regarded as sport because they do not involve considerable physical skill and effort. As a class, brainstorm the question: *What can sport add to our lives?*

## Further Discussion and Inquiry Extension

As a class, learn some French words and phrases. Research the French names for classroom objects and label them.

Research some of the famous artworks at the Louvre and create a display.

Learn about famous French people from different fields, such as: Joan of Arc, Napoleon Bonaparte, Coco Chanel, Zinedine Zidane, Louis Pasteur, Jacques-Yves Cousteau, Marie Curie, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Frédéric Chopin, Charles Perrault, and Andre the Giant.

Research to learn more about the Tour de France. When did it begin? What is involved? Is there also a race for women?

Challenge the students to research other famous buildings in Paris, such as: Sacré-Coeur, Pompidou Centre, Sainte-Chapelle, and Palais Garnier Opera House and present their findings as a poster.

Invite the students to select one of France's thirteen regions (Auvergne – Rhône-Alpes, Bretagne, Bourgogne – Franche-Comté, Corse, Centre – Val de Loire, Grand Est, Hauts de France, Ile de France, Nouvelle Aquitaine, Normandie, Occitanie, Pays de la Loire, Provence – Cote d'Azur) and research to find out what makes this region special. What is it best known for? What is the climate like? What are its well-known landmarks, buildings, or monuments?