

# Big book: Dry Bones

## Narrative Unit 2 – Stories from a range of cultures/Predictable patterned language

- **Unit 2:** Listen with sustained concentration, building new stores of words in different contexts.
- **Unit 2:** Take turns to speak, listen to others' suggestions and talk about what they are going to do.
- **Unit 2:** Explain their views to others in a small group, decide how to report the group's views to the class.



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### Learning objectives

- Learning names of parts of the body.
- Measuring and recording the bones.
- Learning that an apostrophe can be used in contractions which join two words together.
- Using the look, cover, write, check method to learn spellings.
- Learning to identify joints and their uses.
- Using a construction set to make a skeleton shape, if possible with joints.
- Learning about the skeleton itself.
- Practising clapping in time to the song.
- Comparing a human skeleton with a dog's skeleton.
- Learning the history of negro spirituals and listening to an example.

## Day 1

### Shared reading

Show the class the book's front cover and read them the blurb on the back. Do they know what a spiritual is? (A song made up by African-Americans to help them work rhythmically in the fields and plantations. They were called spirituals because they very often included reference to God: 'Now hear the word of the Lord!') Because it's a traditional song, there is no author, just an illustrator. Talk about the title 'Dry Bones' – it means 'skeleton'.

Ask the children if they have seen a picture of a skeleton before. What is a skeleton for? (It's a framework to keep our bodies the right shape.) What would happen to us if we didn't have a skeleton? (We'd be all collapsed like a jelly.) What are bones for? (They are attached to each

other and to muscles which make us move. Bones also help to produce part of our blood.)

The back cover shows the tune for the song. Practise this with the children a few times before you start reading the book. And, each time you read or sing the book:

- Chant or sing the verse, encouraging the children to join in.
- Model the reading experience by singing or saying the words clearly and rhythmically.
- Point to particular words, phrases or initial sounds from time to time to reinforce knowledge and to show left to right.
- Encourage the children to point to the relevant parts of the body as they sing the song.
- Discuss what the child in each picture is doing. How do the children use that part of their body? How many uses can they think of?
- Show that the apostrophe stands for the missing 'i' in 'is' and write the text 'bone is' to demonstrate.
- Sound out regular words (for example: d-e-m, l-e-g, h-i-p) and point to each letter as you do so.
- Point to the different bones that are revealed and name them.
- On the last page, count how many times you read the word 'bone'.

Bearing all these points in mind, read the book through, emphasising the rhythm and repetition. Explain that 'dem' means 'them' or 'those'.

### Whole class activity

Look at the page opposite the first page of the text. It shows a picture of a child with all the body parts labelled. Encourage the children to name each part, touching their own as they do so.

### Independent activity

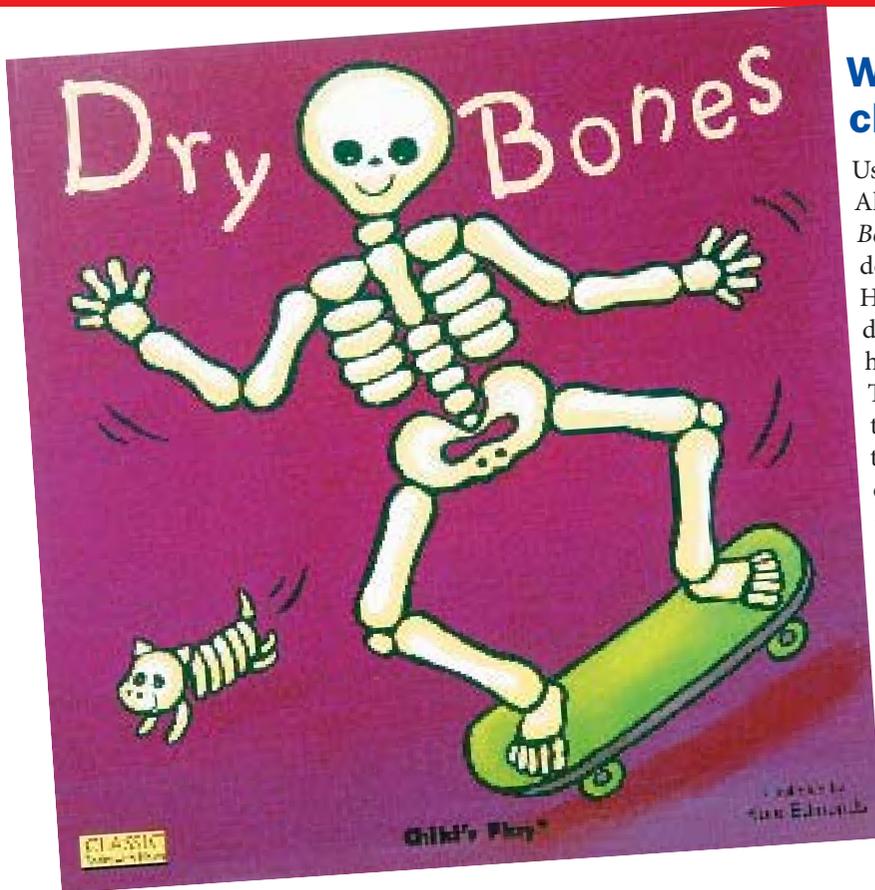
I suggest a carousel of five different activities that each group of children can do during the week. This makes

resourcing much easier, but if you would prefer to do one activity on each day with the whole class, that is obviously an option.

- Ask the group to work in pairs. Give each pair a tape measure (or a piece of string and a metre stick). The children should take it in turns to measure each other's: Skull (top of head to base of head); collar bones (left shoulder to right shoulder); spinal column (base of skull to base of spine); pelvic bone (left hip to right hip); humerus (shoulder to elbow); femur (hip to knee); fibula and tibia (knee to ankle); foot bones (heel to big toe); hand bones (wrist to middle finger). Make a chart so that they can fill in the results for each other.
- 'Bone's' means 'bone is'. The apostrophe shows that a letter (or two letters) has been missed out. Give the group the following list and ask them to write the words out as contractions. He is, We are, I am, There is, I have, We will. Then ask them to think of some contractions of their own.
- Looking at the book, how many three-lettered words can this group find? Write them down on wipe boards, practising look, cover, write, check to make sure they're spelled correctly.
- Joints are where bones are connected together and they enable us to bend. Give the children a copy of the figure opposite the first page of text, without the labels, and ask them to label the joints in the body. Name one thing that each joint helps us to do.
- Using a construction set, see if you can make a skeleton shape. You might even be able to make a joint, depending on which set you have.

### Plenary

Look at the first group's work and ask them to demonstrate how they did the measuring and recording. Ask whether having a big skull means that you also have a long femur, and similar questions.



## Day 2

### Shared reading

Sing through the book again, encouraging the children to join in and point to their different bones as they are mentioned.

### Whole class activity

Show the picture of the skeleton towards the end of the book. Explain that it only shows the main bones and that we actually have 206 bones altogether. The biggest bone is the femur or thigh bone and the smallest is one of the bones in the ear, which vibrates with two others so that we can hear.

### Individual activity

Rotate the groups so that each one is doing different work.

### Plenary

Look at the apostrophe group's work. Talk about some other contractions: can't, won't, shan't, wouldn't, for example. Why do we use them? Because they're easier and quicker to say.

## Day 3

### Shared reading

Sing through the book again, this time encouraging the children to clap in time to the music.

## Whole class work

Using Allan Ahlberg's *Funny Bones*, look at the dog's skeleton. How is this different from the human skeletons? The bones are the same, but they are jointed differently and are different sizes. Some of the differences are because a dog walks on four legs, whereas people walk on only two. Read the whole of *Funny Bones* if you have time,

either now or after the Plenary.

### Individual activity

Rotate the groups again.

### Plenary

Think of some more three-letter words and use them to remind the children about look, cover, write, check.

## Day 4

### Shared reading

Read the book through once again, encouraging the children to move rhythmically from side to side.

### Whole class work

Go to [www.soundjunction.org](http://www.soundjunction.org). Put 'negro spirituals' in search and follow the link

to 'negro spirituals to gospel'. (This is a fascinating website and you might want to explore it for yourself.) This page tells you the basic history of negro spirituals. Explain to the children about the call and response of these songs and then play them the excerpt on the same page by Mahalia Jackson. You may want to play some other examples too.

### Independent work

Back to the carousel.

### Plenary

Look at the work done by the joint group and discuss joints. Interesting fact: elephants are the only animals with four knees. In other animals the back and front legs are differently jointed.

## Day 5

### Shared reading

Give the book a final reading, encouraging the children to join in with you where they can. What have they enjoyed about the book? Would they recommend it to someone else? What can they remember about the skeleton?

### Whole class work

Look at the last page. Ask for estimates as to how many times 'bone', 'bones' and 'bone's' are written. The answer is 26 – if you put a 0 in the middle you have the number of bones in the human body!

### Independent work

Rotate the groups for the last time.

### Plenary

Look at the construction set skeletons. If there were any particularly good ones during the week, you will hopefully have saved them.

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## This week's essentials

- A big book copy of 'Dry Bones' illustrated by Kate Edmunds, published by Child's Play. £11.99.
- A chart showing measurements of different bones for children (see first activity).
- A list of words to make into contractions.
- Copies of the drawing opposite the first page of text, with labels removed.
- A construction set or two.
- A copy of Allan Ahlberg's 'Funny Bones'.
- Website [www.soundjunction.org](http://www.soundjunction.org).