



# Activity Pack

# Twist of Gold

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**Dear Teacher/Parent**

**We do hope you enjoyed the show! Here are a few activities for you to do with your children after you have seen the performance. Most of these exercises are drama based and are good for developing speaking and listening skills.**

Key  
Stage  
2

Key  
Stage  
3

All of the exercises are suitable for both KS2 and KS3 pupils. Where the exercise has been extended for KS3, this will be indicated with an icon.

## **Twist of Gold Activity Pack**

### **Show Trailer**

Key  
Stage  
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Key  
Stage  
2

If the students feel confident with the story, split the class into groups of four or five. Ask them to create a TV advert or trailer. This should highlight key moments in the play and give a sense of the style of the play. This can also include show dates, ticket prices and key information. If they can remember any music or lines from the play they could also act these out.

Then ask the audience to feedback on the piece they have seen, what they liked? What could have been improved?

### **Trust Exercises**

Key  
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2

Sean and Annie have to survive on their own throughout their journey to America. They have to learn fast who to trust and who to avoid. They trust the Dragoon to give them food and not destroy their home, they trust him when he says it is time to leave and look for their father because of the Plague approaching.

Ask the class to get into pairs. Ask them to label themselves A and B. A's will close their eyes and B's will slowly guide their partner around the room leading them carefully by the hand. B's must take care not to walk into anyone or anything in the space and not talk during this exercise.

Ask the A's to describe how it felt trusting someone to keep them safe and decide where to go etc, and ask B's how it felt looking after someone, making sure they didn't hurt them and keeping watch for the other people in the room. The pairs can then switch over so that A is leading B. Ask the class what they prefer and how easy they found trusting their partner.

As an extension for KS3

Key  
Stage  
3

Ask them to find a new partner and to label themselves A and B. They will choose a noise or a word. While B closes their eyes A moves away and begins making their chosen noise or saying the word so that B with their eyes firmly closed, can come and find them.

As all the pairs are working at the same time, A's must keep a careful watch out for their partner and B's must listen out for their noise. They must move slowly so as not to bump into others in the room.

When they have found their partner they can switch over.

Key  
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2

Working with the whole class, ask for one pair to go first. The rest of the class forms a maze with their bodies, they can link up to form corridors or they can simply stand in a space. The pair going first will decide who wants to be guided and who wants to guide. The person being guided, with their eyes closed or wearing a blind fold will listen to the instructions from their guide. The guide must tell them to stop when they are near someone and when they can walk, when they should turn and how many steps they can take etc. The rest of the class must keep still and quiet.

Key  
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As an extension you can have two pairs working at the same time as a race to the end of the maze. They must listen out for their own partner's instructions and be aware of the other person who is blindfolded in the space.

### **Traveller's Suitcase**

Key  
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2

Many people were forced to leave their homes in Ireland and move away, taking with them as much as they needed and could carry.

Place a suitcase in the middle of the room, this will contain objects and possessions such as: a book, photos, clothing, a toy or jewellery etc. These can be images of the items and not the actual item.

Ask the class to make a circle around the suitcase and look at the objects one by one. Ask the pupils to examine the objects and describe what they can see. Discuss as a class who this suitcase might belong to. What might this person do? Do they have a family? Where are they travelling to?

Thinking about the objects in the suitcase, ask the class why they think these items are important? Why they have been left behind? How might the object help them?

Split the class into groups of four or five. Ask them to create a story in the groups that include all of the objects. The objects can be used in any order and as many times as they need. Once they have their story they can prepare this as a short scene to show back to the class.

Ask the class to give feedback on what they have seen, encourage them to give positives as well as ways they could improve the scene.

### **The Golden Torc**

Key  
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2

Annie and Sean set out on a very big adventure and they take with them The Golden Torc. This has been in their family for many generations and is very special to them. The children believe it will always keep them safe. It is also The Golden Torc that motivates and keeps them going on their challenging journey.

Ask the class to think about a special object that they would take with them if they were leaving home on an adventure. This can be something they have had for a long time, something they were given or something they hope to pass on in future. This item must be something so special that they would do anything to get it back if it was taken.

Ask them to describe the object and tell the class where it came from. Why it is so important? If it was a gift, who does it remind them of? They should also say how they think it will help them when they are far away.

E.g. the students can choose to take a photograph of home or their family, or a piece of jewellery or something that is lucky and a talisman.

### **Adventurer's Diary**

Key  
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Ask the class to imagine that they are on a journey to a new land and to keep a diary. They can choose to document a period of time during the journey, perhaps at the start or a while into the journey or at the very end. Ask them to write a diary entry for this day. During the day something must happen to their chosen object from home. E.g. the item is stolen or lost or it helps them to keep going or protects them from danger. They must describe what happens and who they meet and also where they are, how long they have been travelling, and as much detail as possible to explain this important day.

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To extend this exercise ask the class to imagine moving to a different country. They must keep a journal that details their arrival in a new land. When they arrive, ask them to describe what it looks like and feels like. What the climate is like and describe any physical features of the land e.g. are there forests, mountains, deserts or towns. What are the people in this land like? Are they friendly? Are they welcoming?

Ask them to consider what it is like to be a stranger in a new land. Is it difficult to settle? Do they miss home? Is life better?

### **Drama Exercise**

Key  
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The diary entries will make great scenes for the class to act out. In groups of 3, one pupil will become the director and the other two pupils will become the actors. The director must choose a key moment from their own diary entry and direct the actors to bring the scene to life

The groups can swap the role of the director to enable each pupil to direct their own scene.

They can then choose which scene they want to show back to the class.

### **Letters from Home**

Key  
Stage  
2

Sean and Annie leave their Mother to go and find their Father in America. Their Mother tells them they should go as she believes she is dying. Their Father left them a year before so he could start a new life in America before coming back to get them.

Ask the class to decide who they want to be, the Mother or the Father. As the chosen character they must write a letter to their children explaining their decision. They should include details of how hard life in Ireland was and why they either had to leave or why they had to send their children away.

They should explain it clearly and include what has happened since. E.g. where has their Father been and why it has taken so long to come and get them, what happened after the children left their Mother, did the Dragoon help her? Did their Father arrive the next day to collect them? Are they sorry or feel they made the right choice? The class must try to imagine how the parents felt and articulate their feelings clearly.

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## Family Tree Fact File

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Annie and Sean's Father moves to start a new life in America. Many people move from one country to another in search of a new life for different reasons. London is a very multi cultural city with people from all over the world.

Ask the class to look at the basic family tree, below. They must either fill in this template or create their own family tree as research home work. They should find out basic information such as name and where they are from but also ask their parents and grandparents for any stories in their time or their own parent's time. They should find out where each member of their family are from and how they have ended up growing up and living in London now. They should try to trace their family back as far as possible and add in as many siblings as necessary.

They will then write down any stories they can find out to present back to class along with their family tree as a fact file on their own family history.

### In role exercise

Key  
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2

Many Irish people left Ireland to start a new life in America. They had to struggle to find a life in a new country, with new people. Often new people in a country are not wanted and find life very hard. This exercise should help the class empathise and think about moving from one place to another.

On a sheet of paper draw a simple map of a land (example in resources). Split the class into two groups and ask them to decide as a group of people where they will live on the map. E.g. do they live in the forests, or by the river, or in the mountains?

As a group they can then discuss this 'tribe' of people. What do they eat? How do they hunt? How do they communicate? Ask them to think of a name for their group and what their individual names will be? These will all be influenced by their environment and will be different from the other tribe in the land. E.g. the river people travel by boat and eat fish but the forest people climb and swing in the trees and eat nuts and seeds. The forest people might live in tree houses, the river people might live on boats.

Ask the class to think about how the tribe is run, who is in charge and how it is governed or operated. Is there a group of people in leadership?

They can design costumes for their tribe and draw the village and the houses, this exercise can be worked on over a series of sessions so that the class get to know their tribe well. You can ask them to come in dressed as their tribes costume.

Tell the class that there has been a flood and it has destroyed the river people's homes and everything they own. The river people must go and live with the forest people.

Call a tribe meeting where the river people and forest people come together. You can play the role of the forest tribe leaders and ask questions to the group as a whole.

Ask the group how they feel about the river people moving to the forest and joining the clan?

How can the river people live alongside the forest people when they don't know how to climb or hunt?

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If they have different ways of communicating how will they decide which language to speak?  
Do the river people want to move? What will they miss?  
If the river people have eaten fish how will they adapt to eating nuts and seeds?  
Will there be enough food for everyone to share?  
Who will be in charge? Will the river people want their same ruler or will they happily live by someone else's rule?  
What can each tribe offer the other? What can they learn from each other? How will they adapt to their new environment?

Ask each group to discuss these questions together.

Encourage them to find a way that the two groups can live harmoniously.

### Story Dice

As they cross America, Sean and Annie encounter a range of colourful characters and conflicting situations that they must overcome and resolve. Courage, luck and the kindness of others play an important part in their survival. Students can create three story dice to write a sequel to *Twist of Gold* and what happens next to Sean and Annie in their life in the New World. Or the sequel to other characters in the book such as Li'l Luke.

Three key elements of storytelling are:

- An atmospheric unusual setting
- Interesting characters
- Conflicts, problems, cliff hangers that the heroes both encounter and resolve.

Ask the class to make three story dice (template is included in resources). Each dice has a combination of new and existing ideas from the play. For example on the 'settings' dice there should be a combination of settings from the play and new ones that the children make up e.g. The new family cottage in California, Martha and Henry's house in Boston, an Indian settlement, a deep mine, a Rich Widow's Mansion and the old saloon boat.

On the 'characters' dice there should be a combination of familiar friends, family, nemeses and new characters e.g. The Bounty Hunter, Li'l Luke, Red Indian Chief, a Rich Widow, Obediah the mine owner, and Mocki the Indian Chief's son.

Conflicts, problems and cliff hangers are the key components of drama and what makes us want to find out what happens next. Situations on the 'conflicts' dice could include: Sean and Annie become separated, there is a terrible fire, someone is injured, somebody gets married, a character suffers from memory loss.

Ask the class to draw their own ideas onto each face of the dice and then write a story throwing the dice as and when they need a new idea.

### Craft exercise

#### Book Jacket

Key  
Stage  
2

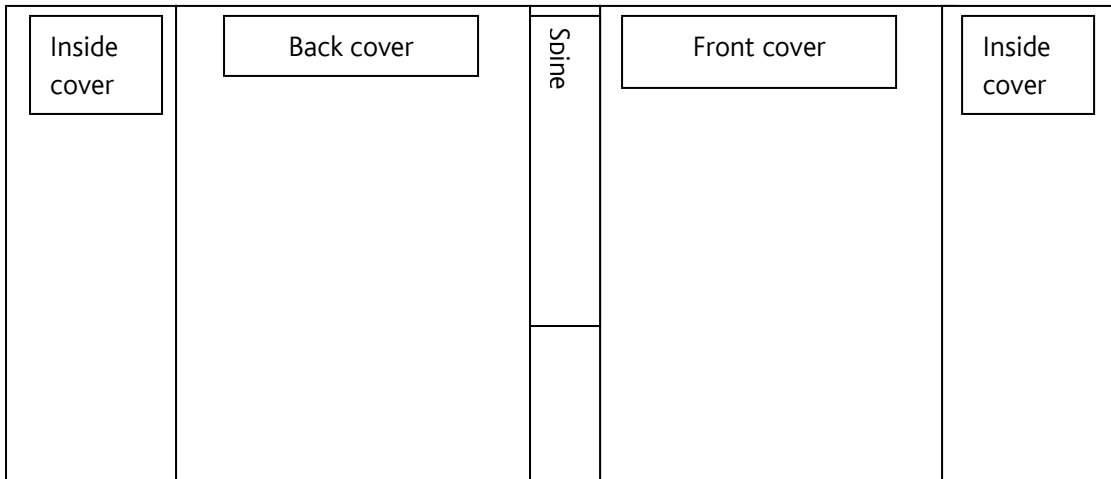
Once the students have written their short story they can design and draw a jacket for the book.

Key components are title, author, a quote, an image, publisher, the blurb for the back and information about the author inside the cover; also they can make a list of other books to go in as other titles by the author!

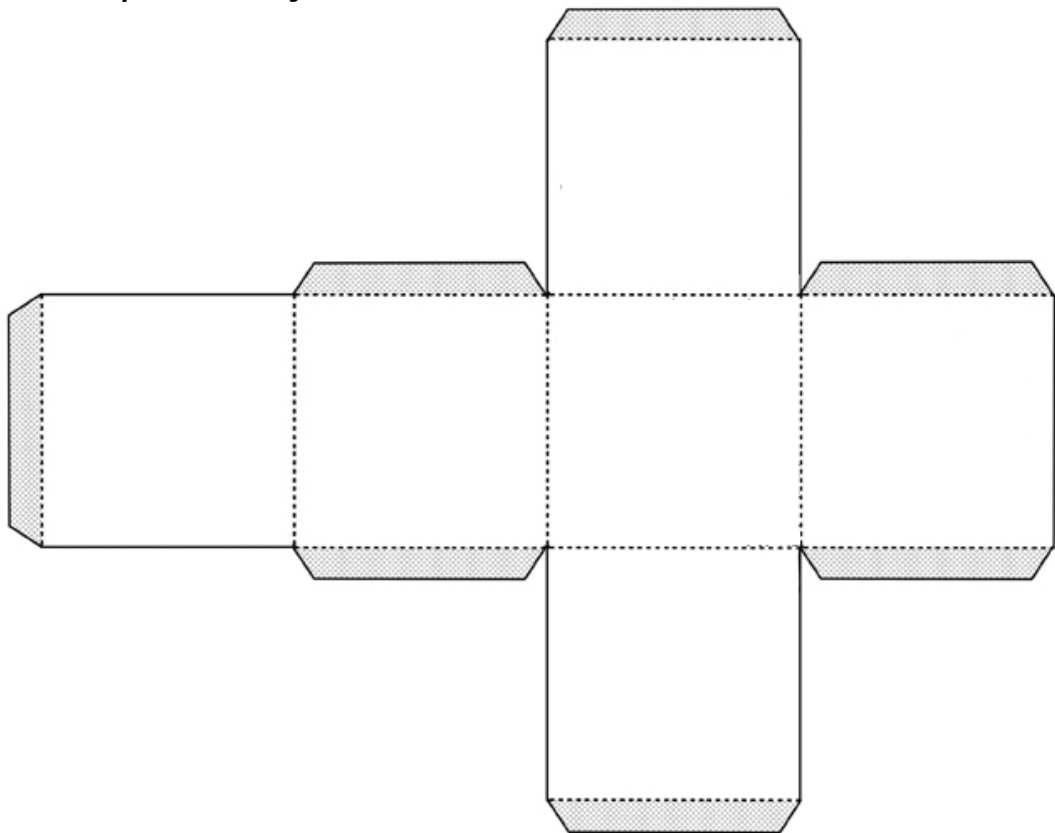
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**Resources**

**Book cover example**

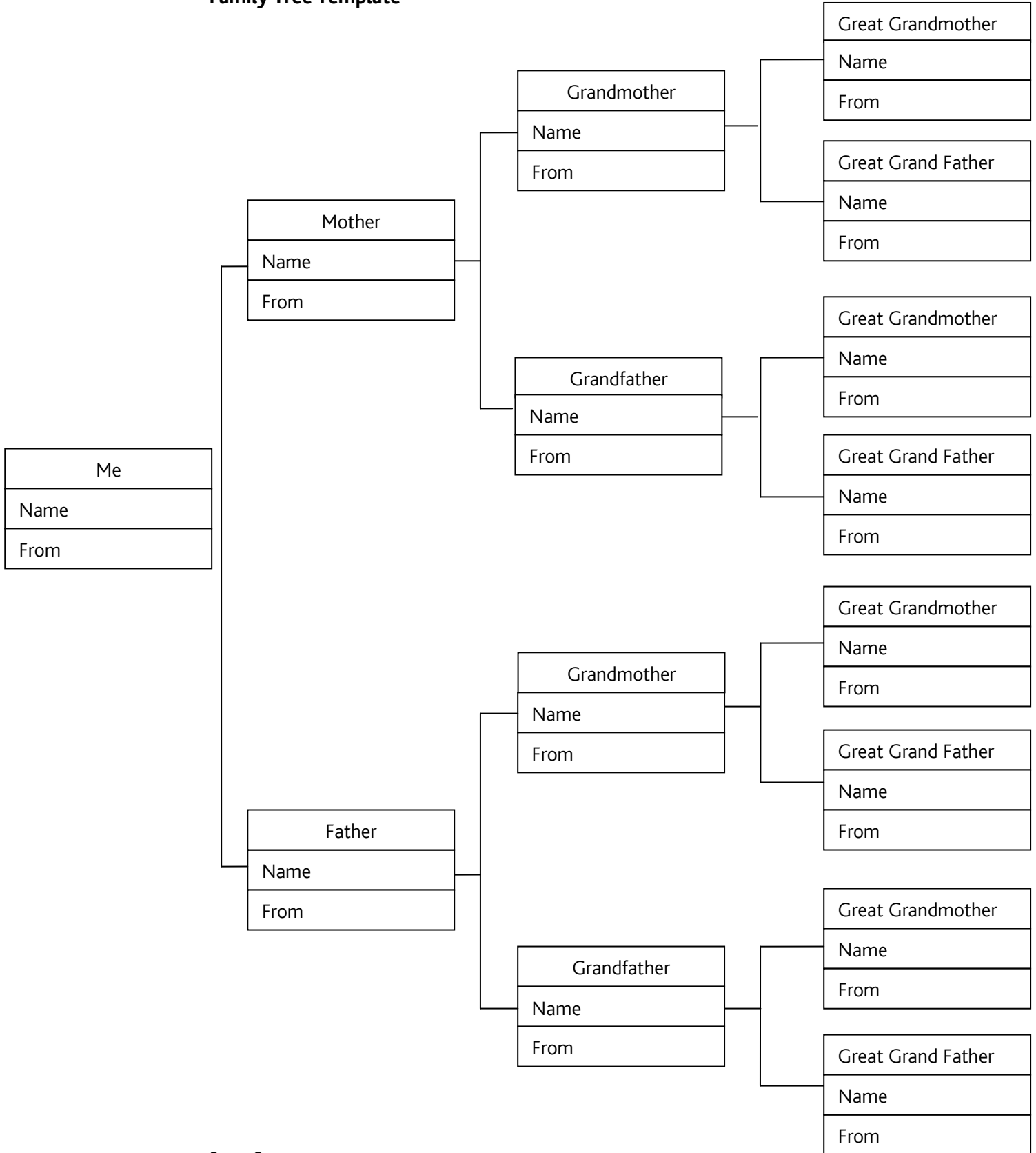


**Dice template for story dice exercise**

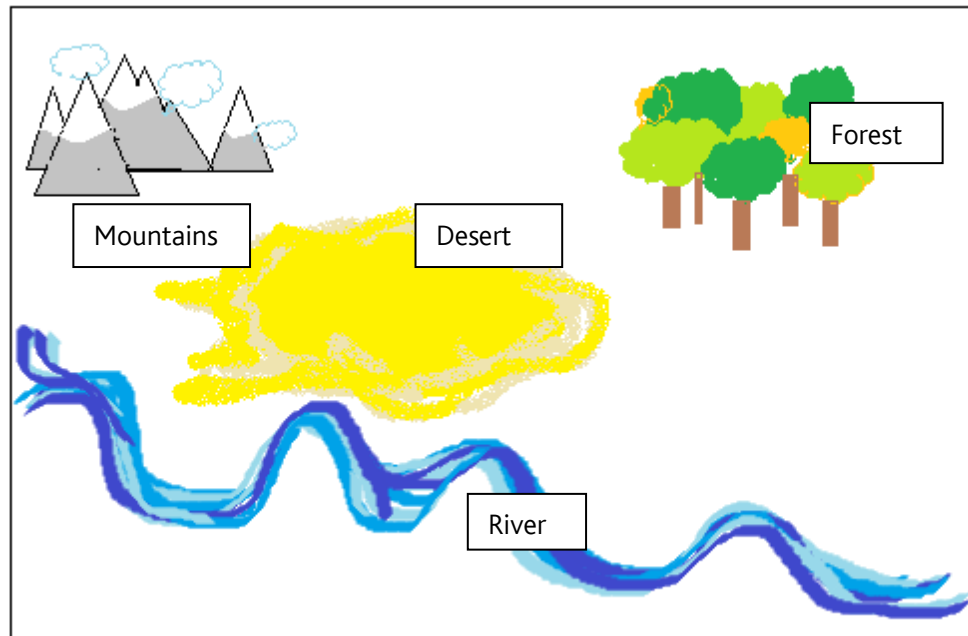




## Family Tree Template



**Basic map idea**



**Story re-cap for exercise one.**

Sean and Annie O' Brien are fishing when they spot a Dragoon on the other side of the river. The Dragoon notices they are practically starved and offers them some food. The children are sceptical but take some because the Dragoon is right...they are starving. They rush home to tell their poor Mother. His mother tells them never to trust an English soldier and to not take food from him again. But Sean and Annie disobey their Mother and go back time and time again each with the Dragoon giving them more food.

One day Sean and Annie are fishing, and notice that the Dragoon looks sad. He tells them there is a plague sweeping Ireland and they have to leave right away. They rush home to tell their Mother but she is too weak to come with them. She tells them to leave without her, and go to America to find their father, taking the Golden Torc with them. A necklace has been in the family for years and will bring them good luck, and curse any who steal it. Sean and Annie set off with the Dragoon to board a ship bound for America. Captain Murray runs the ship and instantly takes a dislike to the children ordering them to hand over their Golden Torc and for Sean to work for him.

Sean and Annie meet a Fiddler who teaches Annie how to dance and Sean how to play the fiddle. He keeps their spirits alive whilst everyone around them is dying. The ship is about to reach land when a terrible storm erupts killing all onboard including the evil Captain and the kind Fiddler, all apart from Annie and Sean who are washed up on America with only the fiddlers case between them. They look inside and see miraculously the Golden Torc is in with the fiddle – the fiddler must have got it back for them!

Annie and Sean find Boston and start to ask the whereabouts of their father. Boston is overcrowded and they soon realise it is riddled with sickness. The children meet Lil Luke, a

black man freed from slavery 30 years before and who is now working for two sisters. Annie and Sean dance and play the fiddle to earn money. Lil Luke and Annie hatch up a plan for the children to live with the two kind old sisters...it works. After living with Martha and Henry for many months, Sean decides it is time to carry on with their quest, and not forget the search for their father. The Sisters are reluctant but tell them to go and find their brother the Colonel in Missouri and he will take them to California, where their father wrote from last.

Lil Luke, Annie and Sean set off in a wagon but soon come across a wicked old Bounty Hunter who steals their Golden Torc. The three travellers reach The Colonels boathouse and tell him all about the Bounty Hunter. The two children stay there getting ready for the trip to California when Annie recognises the Bounty Hunter on the boat. She immediately runs back and tells the Colonel and Sean. The Colonel vows to get them their Golden Torc back and tells them to trust him no matter what.

The Colonel meets the Bounty Hunter and starts to gamble and play cards with him, each time the Colonel loses and gets more and more drunk. Finally when the Colonel has nothing left he bets everything he owns for all the Bounty Hunter has, the only thing left is the Golden Torc. The Colonel beats the Bounty Hunter and the children are once again reunited with their Golden Torc.

The Colonel, Sean and Annie set out across the desert to California, but along the way they are tricked once again by the evil Bounty Hunter, stealing the Torc once more and left for dead in the desert. The Colonel leaves the children a note to get out of the desert without him.

Sean and Annie continue walking through the hot desert but soon give up hope with no food or water left. Up in a tree old Seamus Finn spies them through his looking glass and takes them back to his house in the mountains. He is hunting for gold. The children stay with him helping him on the hunt for gold, when they hear Indians coming down through the mountains. Seamus tells them not to worry, as they are old friends of his. The Indians tell Seamus they have a golden necklace and would Seamus like to buy it off them. The children can't contain their excitement at seeing the Golden Torc and immediately show the Indians how important it is. The Indians demand Seamus hand over all his belongings for the purchase of the Torc. He agrees.

With nothing left except the Torc, Seamus and the children realise it's time to head back down the mountains and go and find their father in California. On their way down Sean stumbled across a piece of gold and the three of them find more gold in the river bed. Seamus, Annie and Sean ask person after person the whereabouts of their father. Finally when they are just about to give up hope, they meet a little old lady who says, Patrick O' Brien lives in the house at the bottom of the river with the big tall chimney. The children leave Seamus, thanking him for his help and take the last few steps of their journey.

Sean and Annie see the house with the big tall chimney and run in through the open door, they hear a voice behind them and all can't believe their eyes when Father, Son and Daughter meet. They hug and cry and jump for joy, until their Father call, 'Darling look who it is', a lady appears at the door and the children realise at once it's their Mother who they left for dead in Ireland. Their Father explains that he came back for her 3 weeks after they had left for America. The family are reunited and vow to set up a new life in America.