

# LESSON PLAN

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- Aim**
- to develop reading skills
  - to extend vocabulary
  - to predict the continuation of a story
  - to identify a literary genre
  - to encourage the pleasure of reading

**Level** B1.1

**Time** 45 mins

**Materials:** 1 front page illustration of the graded reader *The Eighth Sister*  
2 worksheet

## Introduction

This lesson plan introduces *The Eighth Sister*, a fantasy/horror story centred around two 15 year old protagonists. The short extracts chosen will draw students into the plot, encourage them to ask questions, develop their vocabulary and predict what will happen next. All of this with the aim of increasing their pleasure in reading.

## Background notes on the story

It's almost Christmas in the English village of Hollybrook but the winter magic is about to turn into something much more sinister. A series of strange coincidences lead Helen and her cousin Will to investigate clues left by their ancient aunt and manage to break the circle of magic which has reigned over the village for centuries.

The story starts when Helen's mother buys an antique painting. The girl in the portrait looks exactly like Helen. Shortly afterwards Helen receives an unusual necklace for her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday with a red stone in it. It is the same as the one the girl in the portrait is wearing. The accompanying note tells her it is from a Aunt Charlotte, one of her grandmother's eight sisters who everyone thought was dead.

As the story unfolds Will and Helen discover that witches have lived for centuries in the village and baby girls born there during the Yule month (December) are born with witch's blood and destined to join the circle when they are fifteen. They celebrate their powers every year on the night of the winter solstice. Once every fifty years the presence of the Holly King is required to ensure the renewal of the witches' power. The only way to break the circle and stop the magic is for one of the witches themselves to throw a firestone into the Yule Fire.

Before they can do this, there are some questions that need to be answered:

What is a firestone?

Was Aunt Charlotte really a witch?

And what has all of it got to do with Helen?



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## PROCEDURE

### **Before the lesson**

- make a copy of the worksheet (one per student)
- download a photo of an English Village during Christmas as a context of the activity

Tell the students you're going to be speaking about a book called *The Eighth Sister*.

- read the background notes on the story to the class.
- write the title of the graded reader on the board.

### **First Step (10 minutes)**

Ask the students to comment on their first impressions and ask them some questions.

- What genre do you think it is?
- Why is the title unusual?
- How could the 8<sup>th</sup> sister be different from the others?

Show the students the cover illustration and ask again.

### **Second Step (30 minutes)**

Give students the worksheet and explain that the text comes from Chapter 2 of the story.

- Ask them to do EXERCISE 1, Before you read.
- Ask them to work in pairs to check their answers.
- Read Exercise 2, EXTRACT PART 1. You could read it out loud the first time to make the dialogue more dramatic.
- Then ask the students to read it alone or in pairs for a more detailed understanding the second time.
- Ask students to comment with their opinions, predictions and observations.

- **Ask students to read EXTRACT PART 2 (Exercise 3)**

**Then** ask the students to underline the questions (Exercise 4).

This prediction exercise is to help increase their interest in the story and use their imagination. They could speak in pairs or small groups using L1 or English and then present their ideas to the rest of the class.

### **Last Step (5 minutes)**

Ask the students to predict what could happen (Exercise 5). The exercise can be done in pairs or in small groups.

This exercise could be used as a written homework exercise if there is no time in class.

