



inanimate alice

Episode 1: Literacy Resource Pack

These resources have been written to provide teachers with starter activities and ideas relating to **Episode One** of **Inanimate Alice**. They do not constitute a complete course, nor are they detailed lesson plans. They are designed to offer a stimulus for interaction with the text, and to provide opportunities for teachers and learners to explore and develop aspects of literacy.

The pack is designed primarily for use with learners aged 10-14, but may be adapted for older learners if they are being used to develop English as a second language. The principles with which they have been designed may also be adopted and used with other sections of the text and with the later episodes. However, it is recommended that teachers do not attempt every activity, thereby interrupting the flow of the narrative, but rather they are selective in the activities which they think will be appropriate to the needs and preferences of their own students.



Section 3 : Photos

Reading Pictures/Making Predictions

Ask students to write down what we know about Alice so far. They should be able to come up with the following facts:

- she is 8 years old
- she is in Northern China
- she stays with her mum at a base camp
- her father is looking for oil
- he left two days ago and should have been home by now

Now ask them to write down five things they would like to know about Alice.

Now ask them to PREDICT what they think will happen in the story.
(What clues are there in the text?)

Now ask them in groups to look carefully at the pictures in this section.

Group Exercise

Write down what you think you see in each of the photographs.

What do the photographs tell us about the place where Alice is living?

What do they tell us about the people her dad is working for?

Who do you think the people in the photographs are?

How do you think the photographs were taken?

What do the moving images of the jeep tell you about the landscape?

What do the colours in the moving images suggest to you?

Research : China

Begin by asking the class to list all the things they know about China. Using reliable sources, check out how many of them are TRUE and how many of them are MYTHS.

Now tell the class that they are going to do some research on China, and to compare their findings to Alice's description of Northern China in the story. The best way to do this is to set up a class wiki which allows them to collaborate and share in a real team effort (see separate section on setting up a class wiki).

Section 4 : House

Drawing with Alice

In this part of the story we see three views of Alice's house at the base camp:

- A photograph
- A drawing of the cross-section (side view)
- A PLAN view showing the LAYOUT of the house (from above)

Ask the class if they can identify the different sections of the house from the symbols which are used.

Group Discussion

Divide the class into groups. Ask them to look closely at the representations of the base camp and Alice's house, and consider whether this is a place where they would like to live. Divide a piece of paper into two columns and list the PROS and the CONS on either side.

Now ask the class individually to WRITE a brief description of their ideal house.

Now ask them to DRAW their ideal house.

Alice in Social Studies – Saving the Planet

Working in groups, ask your students if they can identify and list the FIVE biggest threats to the future of the planet.

Now ask them to design and draw THE HOUSE OF THE FUTURE. The house should be appropriate for the place in which they actually live and it should take account of:

- Building costs
- Environmental effect
- Running costs
- Appearance and taste

Now ask them to compare the designs with their original 'ideal house'. How do they compare?

Learn Thinking Skills with Alice

Will planet Earth exist for ever?

If the planet is threatened can we, as individuals, do anything to save it?
(A good link here to 'The Story of Stuff' www.storyofstuff.com)*



Section 7 : Brad

Creating character

In this section we are introduced to Alice's virtual friend Brad.

Ask your students to discuss the difference between a real person, a character in a story and an avatar.

We are not told anything about Brad. The only information we have to go on is Alice's drawing. What can you tell about him from the drawing? Answers will probably include the following (kids of course are likely to come up with the unexpected, which makes for a fruitful discussion).

- He is fun
- He smiles a lot
- He is active or sporty
- He has a skateboard
- He is modern

Now ask them to list the qualities their imaginary friend would have if they were to create one. Many of them will have had one at some time in their lives.

Now ask them to draw their own virtual friend.

Art and Design : Creating an Avatar

The popularity of social networks in recent times has encouraged people to create their own avatars ie. graphic representations of themselves.

Ask your students to write down the 5 main characteristics which define who they are. One way of doing this is to have them create an acrostic by using each of the letters of their first name as the first letter of a word which describes their personality.

Now ask them to create a cartoon version of themselves. There are many free websites available which allow you to create your own avatar. It can also be done as a drawing of course, using paper and pencils.

Creative Writing

Collect a range of photographs of people – you can do this easily online or by cutting them from old magazines and laminating them if you want them to last. Distribute them randomly to your students and ask them to write a paragraph in which they present this 'fictional character' to their readers. Introduce them to the idea that characters are defined by:

- a) How they look
- b) What they do
- c) What they say
- d) What others say about them



Section 10 : Wildflowers

Using a Camera

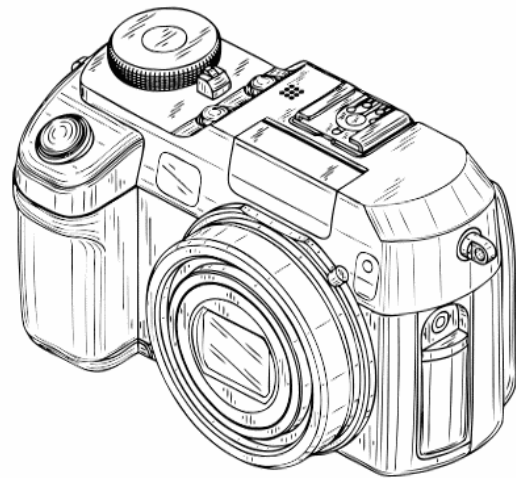
As Alice and her mum are driving along, her mum tells her they are going to look for wildflowers they haven't seen before. Can you identify the flowers Alice has taken with her ba-xi?

Using what cameras are available to you, divide your students into groups and set them the following task:

- Find and photograph as many local wildflowers as you can.
- Email your photographs to a central computer or upload them directly from your camera.
- Identify your wildflowers using reference books or online sources.
- Select your five best photographs and upload them into a PowerPoint presentation.
- Use the 'cropping' tool to standardise your photographs and select only the parts you wish to keep.
- Now add the names of your wildflowers using the 'text box' tool.

Developing Digital Literacy

Can you identify the different parts of the camera? Write the appropriate label on each of the parts.



LENS
ZOOM CONTROL
SETTING SELECT
FLASHLIGHT
SHUTTER
POWER BUTTON

Find out what the following terms mean: OPTICAL ZOOM; MEGA PIXELS

Now write a short definition for each of the following ACTIONS:

SHOOT	
ZOOM	
CROP	
FOCUS	
DELETE	
DOWNLOAD	
UPLOAD	

Section Thirteen : Player Off

Personal and Social Development

Alice is in the middle of making a list of the things she would like to be doing when her mum asks her to switch off the ba-xi. Her list includes the following:

- skateboarding
- going for a swim
- playing a computer game with a friend
- playing with a dog

Ask pupils to write out Alice's list of chosen activities.

Now ask them to make up their own list and give reasons for their choices.

This activity can be extended into a personal talk on 'My Favourite Activity'. The length of the talk will depend on the age and experience of the individual.

Group Discussion

Alice's wish list mentions 'friend' more than once. Travelling around the world with her parents seems like a glamorous life but she would prefer to have the company of someone her own age, which is one of the reasons she creates Brad. Discuss which of the following is most important in life.

- being rich
- having friends
- having a successful career
- being famous

The discussion can be made more or less formal depending on the age and experience of the group, up to and including a formal debate with strict rules, time limits and etiquette for speakers.

Digital Literacy

The story's creators, writer Kate Pullinger and graphic artist Chris Joseph, use a number of techniques to create suspense as the narrative rushes to its conclusion.

Ask your students to pay close attention to the words, pictures and sounds in this section and list the ways in which these three elements contribute to the tense atmosphere. Their answers should include reference to:

- the darkness of the images
- the frantic humming noise of the soundtrack
- the impression of speed created by camera angle in the moving image shots
- the word choice eg. 'annoying and 'frightened'
- the use of short sentences to convey impatience or frustration

Section Eighteen : Restaurant

Asking Questions/Making Predictions

Although the story 'comes to an end' and Alice's dad John is alive and well, there are a number of questions which remain unanswered.

In groups, ask your students to discuss and write down the questions which they would like answered, and using the evidence in front of them, try to provide answers. An effective way of doing this is to have groups swap questions and attempt to answer each other's. You may wish to give them some starters for consideration eg.

- What do you think actually happened to Alice's dad?*
- How does Alice feel about her way of life?*
- Will they stay in China after this incident?*
- Will Alice get her dog at last?*
- What is causing the humming sound in the sky?*
- Why don't we ever see Alice?*

Reading Pictures/Making Comparisons

Freeze the narrative on the final screenshot.

Ask your students to describe in detail what they see, paying particular attention to:

- Objects in the frame
- Colour
- Tone (this will need some explanation)
- Symbols (map, no food signs etc)
- Movement

Now ask them what it reminds them of. Film? TV? Games?

Now ask them to divide a sheet of paper into two columns and begin to list the features of transmedia texts against traditional printed stories.

Transmedia	Printed story
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Reading Aloud

Download the transcript of the story and distribute copies to the class.

In pairs, ask your students to take turns at reading the story to each other, making sure they use the appropriate emphasis at the most dramatic parts of the story.

Discuss with them how direct speech is distinguished from narrative.

Look carefully at how commas are used to help the reader make proper meaning from the text and discuss how difficult it would be if they were taken out.