



## KS1 MAGELLAN

The teaching took place in a Hampshire First School with a Year 2 class. I worked with the class for two mornings.

My lessons provided part of the history and geography element in a wider topic of 'Water'. The teaching was done through the powerful medium of storytelling. The first session was taken up by the storytelling, and the second was used for an assessment activity.

I had earlier told the story of Christopher Columbus and his discovery of America. Now I moved to the story of Ferdinand Magellan, who in 1519 set off on the first voyage around the world. Magellan was killed by islanders during the expedition, and only one of his original five ships returned to Spain, under the command of Sebastian Del Cano. The story was a long one; the children's interest and involvement were sustained by interludes of role-play, questioning and discussion.

*[NC 6c: the lives of significant men, women and children drawn from the history of Britain and the wider world]*

### Learning objectives

For the children to:

- be able to recall and select key elements of the story of Magellan and Del Cano's voyage around the world
- understand the importance of the voyage and its geographical range
- consider appropriate rewards for the sailors who returned to Spain
- communicate their understanding by designing a commemorative medal.

### Key questions

If you were the King of Spain, what reward would you give to Del Cano and his sailors?

What is the best way to remember Magellan, his men, and their achievements?

## Resources

Large globe

The story of Magellan's life and voyage around the world. Most libraries will have children's versions of the story. You can find adult versions on the internet at:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand\\_Magellan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand_Magellan) (this is the best version, and contains useful pictures and maps, though it omits some of the details of the sailors' suffering as they crossed the Pacific Ocean)

[www.mdstud.chalmers.se/~md2nicke/MISSUPPFATTNINGAR/magellan.txt](http://www.mdstud.chalmers.se/~md2nicke/MISSUPPFATTNINGAR/magellan.txt)  
(comprehensive, detailed)

[www.nndb.com/people/629/000092353/](http://www.nndb.com/people/629/000092353/) (also comprehensive and scholarly)

[www.notablebiographies.com/Lo-Ma/Magellan-Ferdinand.html](http://www.notablebiographies.com/Lo-Ma/Magellan-Ferdinand.html) (easy to read, but not as detailed as the first three websites)

## Year group and Time

Year 2, mixed gender and ability. Two whole morning sessions.

## The teaching [Session 1]

This session focused on the story of Magellan, using a globe [*NC geography 2c*] and a series of pictures showing different parts of the voyage. As the story unfolded, we followed the voyage on the globe, illustrated the places he visited with the pictures, and discussed what each place was like. We broke up the story and brought it alive with interludes of role play. I also posed questions and held discussions designed to get the children thinking about some of Magellan's problems.

### Episode 1

*Focus: Storytelling – Magellan's life before his amazing voyage.*

I began telling the class Magellan's story, starting with his childhood as a page-boy to the Queen of Portugal, then moving on to his service in the navy, where he was accused of stealing some money.

### Episode 2

*Focus: Storytelling continued; role play and class discussion to involve the children in the story.*

The story moved on to Magellan's approach to the King of Spain with a proposal for a voyage to the Spice Islands of the east – to be reached by sailing west. The globe was essential here to help the children understand how Magellan could reach east by going west. The King of Spain gave him five ships. We used role play at this point, involving the children to show how Magellan might have chosen people for different types of job on his ships.

Next came stage one of the voyage to South America and the mutiny threat of the Spanish captains. Here we discussed with the class what action they thought Magellan should take to deal with the Spanish captains.

### **Episode 3**

*Focus: The rest of the story is told.*

We now reached stage two of the journey, through the Magellan Straits, the sufferings of crossing the Pacific Ocean, arrival at Cebu Island, and the death of Magellan on the island of Mactan.

Then the final stage of the voyage: the expedition reached the Spice Islands, with Sebastian del Cano now in command of the expedition, and the *Victoria*, after a long and difficult voyage, eventually arrived back in Spain.

Again, the globe and pictures helped the class to understand the extent of the voyage and the different geographical conditions the explorers encountered.

Magellan's story had taken up most of the morning. It was a very long tale for the children to listen to, but for the assessment task in the next session I wanted them to have a range of events to draw on.

### **Episode 4**

*Focus: Role play – advising the King.*

After finishing the story, I told the class that the seventeen survivors had reported back to the King of Spain. I asked the children to advise the King of Spain: *How should Del Cano and his sailors be rewarded?*

The children's responses:

Give them a silver medal

Give them a NEW ship

Give a pot of gold to each person

Give some special food

A chest full of gold

A silver medal each

Millions of silver coins in a box

Lots of money

Give them a house each

Give each one an island in America

Give them the sun and moon

Give them chocolates

Give them a cake

Give them a castle to live in

Give them a red racing car.

The range of ideas offered reflected aspects of the story which had impressed the children. For example, the rewards involving food were probably prompted in the children's minds by the long period of starvation when the ships crossed the Pacific Ocean.

The child who suggested giving the sun and moon had made this suggestion quite seriously, perhaps groping towards the idea that such an achievement was beyond human reward.

### **Episode 5**

*Focus: Commemorating those who had died.*

With the idea of remembrance in mind, I posed my final question: *What about all those sailors who died on the journey?*

The children's ideas were all appropriate:

Put flowers where they were buried or died

Make a statue for them

Make special prayers for God to look after them

Have a special celebration on the day they died.

This was the end of the morning's session. I decided to follow up the suggestion of 'a silver medal each' as the focus of the assessment activity in the second session.

## **The teaching [Session 2]**

### **Episode 1**

*Focus: Setting the assessment task – design of a commemorative medal.*

Before the session, I had prepared an outline shape of a medal, and made a copy for each of the children.

I began the session by saying that the King liked all the suggestions, but especially the one about a medal. Could his designers draw up a design for a medal that would remind the survivors, and anyone else, about Magellan's journey? The King would like the design to have four pictures showing the most important parts of the journey. Around the outside there should be some words about the journey.

The challenge for the children was to select, from a long story full of happenings, just four events they considered really important; and then to think up some words for the outside rim of the medal. I gave no guidance about the words, for I wanted to see what ideas the children would have.

## Episode 2

*Focus: Designing the medals; explaining ideas.*

I gave each child the outline of the medal, and they set to work on their designs. While they were doing this, we talked to each pupil and noted down what they said. We asked each child about his or her four pictures and the writing around the outside rim of the medal.

This record of the children's explanations was an essential part of the assessment of their learning.

The medal design, and discussion with the two adults, took up the whole session.

## Learning outcomes

The children:

- considered, thoughtfully and imaginatively, appropriate rewards for the sailors who returned to Spain
- were almost all able to recall and select four key elements of the story (history), including locations and conditions (geography)
- communicated their understanding by designing a commemorative medal and explaining their thinking.

## Reflection

The Magellan story was long and complex for young children, and the assessment task required a mental search for relevant information from the story to put onto the medal. Despite this, all the children, except for Lacey, understood the task and responded to it appropriately, using episodes from the story in their medal designs (Lacey's pictures did not relate to the story – they included an Isle of Wight boat and two aeroplanes).

In my assessment, I was looking for the ability of the children to make a selection from the Magellan story events [*NC History: Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past*]. I also wanted to see if they could describe the voyage using geographical vocabulary [*Geography: 2a; 3b*]. I also hoped to see evidence that the children could make mental leaps with the evidence, fitting together pieces of the jigsaw to present an individual, creative explanation. The children's ideas about the voyage had to be translated into visual form.

We wrote down exactly what the children told us about their pictures. We thus recorded their oral communication of learning and understanding, which amplified what their drawings showed (*NC: Organisation and communication*).

The children's explanations varied in their degree of precision and detail. Breeze, for example, used precise words such as '*Magellan Straits*', '*storm near Antarctic*' and '*a Spanish captain is hanged*', reflecting both historical and geographical knowledge and understanding. Aaron was far less specific, using phrases such as '*they needed food*', '*this one got left*'.

I was also looking for the ability to find a personal significance in these events. The short piece of writing around the rim of the medal should sum up for the child one of the meanings of the story.

The children's writing round the rim, like their pictures, revealed differences in thinking. Aaron and Valerie, for example, repeated the same phrase, '*well done*' or '*good man*', round their rims, while Breeze, Emma and Bianca created sentences that captured something central about the journey. In other words, they demonstrated an understanding of the significance of the voyage. Breeze wrote: '*You are the first Person to sailed around the whole wide world*'. A particularly creative sentence was that of Nicholas: '*So now poor Magellan is lying underground. He is dead. Now we say a prayer.*'

### **Nuffield Primary History project**

**General editor:** Jacqui Dean

**Author of this unit:** Ray Verrier

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