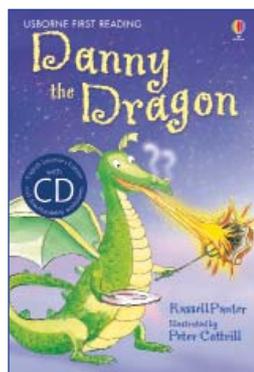


Danny the Dragon • Teacher's notes



Author: Russell Punter

Reader level: Intermediate

Word count: 491

Lexile level: 290L

Text type: Contemporary fairy tale

About the story

Danny is a friendly, helpful dragon. All the villagers know him and like him. He cooks their food, lights their fires and candles, and wanders happily home to the woods each night. That is, until one day a stranger, Mr. Marvo, arrives in the village with his magic fire sticks. They can light fires, cook food and light candles too. The villagers rush to buy the magic sticks and that evening, when Danny makes his rounds, there is nothing left for him to do. Dejected, Danny slinks back into the woods.

That very same evening, a group of robbers decide to storm the village, stealing candles and cooked food. When the villagers call for help, Mr. Marvo makes a hasty exit, but Danny hears their cries. He runs to the rescue, breathing flames to scare the robbers off, and is cheered by the villagers. They ask him to light their fires as he did before, and they make him a lovely kennel... out of Mr. Marvo's now-unwanted fire sticks.



About the author

Russell Punter was born in Bedfordshire, England. When he was young, he enjoyed making up and illustrating his own stories. His ambition as a boy was to become a cartoonist. When he grew up, he studied art at college before becoming a graphic designer and writer. He has written over forty children's books.

Key words

Your students might not be familiar with some of these words, which are important in the story.

p2 villagers	p32 noticed
p3 salesman	smoke
gang	p34 cried [meaning "shouted"]
robbers	chief
p4 tiny	p35 stormed
p5 morning [short for "good morning"]	p36 toasty
p10 lit	p37 snatched
candles	tasty
p12 stranger	p38 handy
p13 mobile	p41 charged
p16 incredible	p42 beards
p17 unbelievable	p43 toasted
p18 wonderful	p45 burned
p19 amazed	p46 thankful
wagon	

Key phrases

p13	Roll up
p20	as usual
p41	Shall I..?
p29	it was the same story
p31	at that moment
p34	Grub's up! [meaning "Food's ready!"]
p35	snatched away
p39	to run away
p40	Save us!
p42	set [something] on fire
p45	to run off
	never seen again
p47	to find another use for



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Before reading

You could ask your students to tell you all they know about dragons. Write the key features on the board [e.g. breathe fire, can fly, fight knights, hoard gold, etc]. Are dragons usually friendly or scary?

Split the students into small groups and ask them to discuss how a dragon might be useful. For example, if they managed to tame a dragon, what would they ask it to do for them?

Introduce the idea that stories of dragons are usually set long ago. Ask the class to think about differences between modern life and life in the past. What did people not have, and what did they use instead? How might a dragon have been useful long ago? [If the topic of fire being needed for cooking, heat and light hasn't come up yet, you could introduce it now.]

Show the front of the book to the class. Can they see what Danny the Dragon is doing here?

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Reading or listening

You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same. After the story, there is a short selection of key phrases that can be used for pronunciation practice.

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During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.

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| p5 | Can you imagine a dragon walking into a market today? How would people react if they didn't know him? | p25 | How do you think Danny feels? |
| p8 | How could the villagers have lit their fires without a dragon? [Matches weren't invented until 1826; fires were often kept alight all day] | p30 | Why does Danny try not to cry? Is he trying to be brave? |
| p9 | Which details in the picture show you how the villagers feel about Danny? | p35 | Why do you think the robbers are storming the village? What do they want? |
| p11 | Would you be tempted to buy some of Mr. Marvo's magic fire sticks? | p39 | Who do you think <i>can</i> help them? |
| p18 | What (or who) else can do all these things? | p41 | How would you describe Danny's action? |
| | | p44 | Do you think Danny is being mean? [He could have burned them to a crisp if he wanted to!] |
| | | p47 | Does Danny look happy now? |
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After reading

Why do you think Danny likes his job? How does helping others make him feel? Would you like to live in Danny's village?

Imagine if Danny didn't come to the village one day and the villagers didn't have any fire sticks. What would they do then? How else can people make fire without matches? In the old days, people might rub dry sticks together, use flints (a kind of stone) to make sparks, or carry a tinderbox (usually with a flint and some very fine, dry wood) – but it was hard work!

Did you know?

For centuries people thought dragons really existed, especially when massive 'dragon' bones were discovered. We now know that they were actually dinosaur bones.

There is a massive 3m (10ft) long lizard from Indonesia that's known as a Komodo dragon. It has a forked tongue but no wings, and it can't breathe out fire.

Dragons in Western mythology are usually fearsome monsters, but Chinese dragons (without wings) are associated with wisdom and good fortune.

