

Teachers' Notes for THE WICKIT CHRONICLES by Joan Lennon

Four exciting adventures of Pip and Perfect the gargoyle, set in the middle of a huge medieval swamp!

1. ELY PLOT
2. FEN GOLD
3. ICE ROAD
4. WITCH BELL

The Wickit Chronicles can be read as stand-alones or in any order. Some of the activities are specific to one book, and some may be used with any of the books.

Although the stories are obviously fictional, I did a lot of research into the medieval period and the Fenland areas in which they're set, and discovered a multitude of fascinating facts, some of which are included at the back of each book.

There is a Wickit minisite on my own website (www.joanlennon.co.uk/wickit_mini/wickit_mini.htm) with details about each of the books, a podcast, Puzzle Pages, a spooky trailer and a guide to some of the medieval cures I discovered.

Once you've read the books, choose some of these activities and questions. You can work with a friend or in a group. Always start by discussing the question with your group.

ELY PLOT

1. When I was writing these stories about Pip, Perfect and Wickit Monastery, I could picture them all in my imagination. It felt quite strange at first to see the pictures the artist, David Wyatt, drew of them.

Talk about whether you like illustrations in your books - or would you rather leave the pictures to *your* imagination?

Make a list of your favourite illustrators, and find out which are the most popular in the class.

Draw pictures of what *you* think Pip and Perfect looked like.

2. Imagine that you are a medieval traveller who finds themselves arriving at Wickit Monastery one misty autumn evening.

Draw a picture of the monastery as it looms out of the mist.

Write a conversation between you and one of the Brothers. Is he friendly?

Does he make you welcome?

Write a letter to your family telling them about your stay at Wickit Monastery - describing the food and drink, the Brothers, Pip (not Perfect, because you

wouldn't have been able to see her) and where you slept. Were you comfortable? Was the food tasty? Would you have liked to stay longer? What kind of traveller are you? Where might you be going and why?

3. It is absolutely vital that nobody but Pip knows about Perfect. Luckily, the hood in Pip's habit is the ideal hiding place.
If you had a gargoyle like Perfect today, how would you go about keeping her a secret? How difficult would it be?
Draw a picture of Perfect peeping out of her modern-day hiding place.
Write a story about all the tangles you can get in when you try to hide something!

FEN GOLD

1. In pairs or groups, make a list of as many words as you can to describe a swamp, like the Fens in the book. Make another list of words to describe how hard it would be to move through a swamp. Here's one each to start you off:

Squidgy

Struggle

Use the two lists as word banks and make a poem to describe what it's like trying to get out of a swamp. You can set the poem in Pip and Perfect's time, or any other time in history.

2. Read Chapter One.

Talk about why mists and fogs are so creepy.

Fisher Sly claims to have seen lots of ghosts over the years, other than the ghost ship.

Draw some pictures of misty ghouls and make up spooky names for them.

Choose your favourite and write a poem or story about him or her.

3. I loved putting together "The World of Wickit" scrolls at the end of the each book. There are so many fascinating facts about the way people lived in medieval times. Do you have any questions you'd liked answered about Pip's time? Let me know and I'll add them to my website (www.joanlennon.co.uk) and do my best to answer them.

ICE ROAD

1. Brother Gilbert walks in his sleep, scaring everybody half to death. Write a poem that begins:

I went for a walk the other night

With my pjs on and my eyes shut tight ...

What happens next?

2. Who's your favourite brother at Wickit Monastery? Why?
Who's your least favourite brother? Why?

3. There's some information about medieval medicine in the back of each of the Wickit books. Some of the cures are pretty revolting. Which is your favourite?

Make up a medieval-style recipe for a cure for the common cold, and draw the ingredients.

Today we have vaccinations and antibiotics to prevent and cure illnesses. Find out about how and when these medicines were developed.

WITCH BELL

1. On my website you will find the Wickit Chronicles minisite:

www.joanlennon.co.uk/wickit_mini/wickit_mini.htm

Click on the Spooky Trailer. Watch and listen.

I loved making the spooky sound effects - can you make your own soundtrack for one of the Wickit books?

2. The Traveller sings a song in Italian.

Make a list of words the words you know from other languages. You probably more know than you think - did you realise that *pizza*, *hamburger* and *guitar* are not English words?

Ask everybody in the class if they speak another language, apart from English. They may only speak it at home. Make a list of all the languages spoken by the people in your class.

If you can speak another language, why not write a poem about Perfect and send it to me to put on my website!

3. I love reading about medieval times, though I'm not sure how much I'd like to time-travel and actually BE in medieval times.

What would be the best things about living in Wickit Monastery?

What would be the worst things about living in Wickit Monastery?

What bit of history do you think would be most interesting to visit? Imagine you could! Who would you like to meet? Write a scene or story about what might happen.