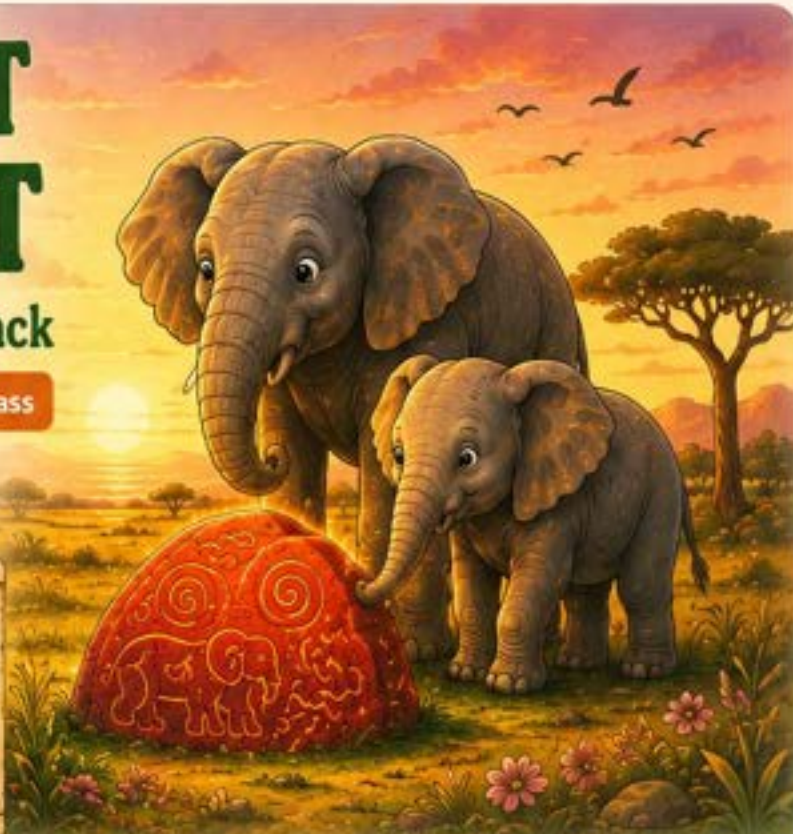


THE SECRET ELEPHANT

Irish Schools Education Pack

Cross-Curricular Resources for 2nd–6th Class

Based on the family musical by Steven Lee
Created by The People's Theatre Company



ABOUT THIS PACK

This Education Pack has been created to support teachers in delivering rich, cross-curricular learning inspired by *The Secret Elephant*.

It is designed for 2nd–6th Class and can be used:

- as a one-off lesson
- as a short sequence of lessons
- or as a full thematic project

You do not need to see the show to use this pack — but if your class does, pupils will recognise the characters and feel like experts.



What's Inside

Each lesson includes:

- a short story extract
- clear learning intentions
- Curriculum Links for the Irish Primary Curriculum
- ready-to-use activities
- worksheets for different levels
- opportunities for reflection, discussion, and creative response



Curricular Areas Supported

This pack supports learning across:

- Language (English)
- SESE (Geography, Science, History)
- Arts Education (Drama, Visual Arts, Music)
- SPHE / Wellbeing
- Emotional Literacy & Empathy
- Creative Thinking & Imagination



Themes Explored

- Bravery & resilience
- Family & belonging
- Journeys & migration
- Habitats & survival
- Symbolism & storytelling
- Friendship & support



CONTENTS



1. About This Pack
2. Curriculum Areas Supported
3. Themes Explored



Lesson 1 — Feelings & Empathy

Understanding emotions, identifying feelings, responding with kindness



Lesson 2 — Migration & Maps

Journeys, continents, oceans, movement and belonging



Lesson 3 — Courage & Support

Bravery, reassurance, helping others



Lesson 4 — Drama: Stepping Into the Story

Role-play, freeze-frames, character exploration



Lesson 5 — Symbolism & Carvings

Meaning in objects, visual storytelling, creative interpretation



Lesson 6 — Animals, Habitats & Survival

Adaptation, environments, how animals meet their needs



Final Reflection — Belonging & Goodbye

Closure, personal response, emotional literacy



Credits



LESSON 1 – FEELINGS & EMPATHY

Suitable for 2nd–6th Class



LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To explore feelings, recognise empathy, and understand how characters support one another.

CURRICULUM LINKS (IRELAND)



Language (Oral Language & Comprehension)

- Discuss feelings and responses to events in a story
- Explore characters' motivations and emotions



SPHE / Wellbeing

- Identifying feelings
- Understanding empathy
- Recognising how others can help us feel safe

STORY EXTRACT (to set the scene)

Nessie: "I'm scared."

Dani: "Chin up little pup.
Anything's possible."

SUMMARY:

Nessie is frightened and unsure.
Dani comforts her, showing bravery and reassurance even though she is scared too.



STARTER (10 MINUTES)

WHAT DO FEELINGS LOOK LIKE?

1. Ask pupils to show "scared", "brave", "worried", "hopeful" using facial expressions or body language.
2. Discuss how we can feel more than one feeling at the same time.
3. Ask:
 - Can you be scared and brave at once?
 - What helps you feel safe?



MAIN ACTIVITY (20–25 MINUTES)

1. Exploring Feelings in the Story

Discuss:

- How Nessie feels in the extract
- How Dani supports her
- Why support from others helps us be brave

2. Younger Classes (2nd–3rd Class)

Task — Feelings & Friendship Actions

Pupils:

1. Draw two simple faces:
 - Nessie's feeling (e.g., scared, worried)
 - Dani's feeling (e.g., caring, brave)
2. Write or dictate one sentence:
"Dani helps Nessie by..."
3. Choose one "friendship action" they could do in school:
 - sitting with someone
 - saying kind words
 - helping someone who is worried



3. Older Classes (4th–6th Class)

Task — Empathy & Support Reflection Sheet

Pupils complete a short reflection:

- When have I felt nervous or unsure?



- Who helped me? How?



- What does bravery mean to me?



- How can I support someone else who feels worried?



PLENARY (5 MINUTES)

Ask pupils:

- What is one thing you learned about bravery today?
- How can we help others feel supported?
- Why is kindness important?



OLDER CLASSES EXTENSION

Write a short paragraph comparing Dani's bravery to a real-life example of someone showing courage (a friend, family member, or historical figure).



OPTIONAL 1ST CLASS ADAPTATION

- Children choose an emotion card (happy, sad, scared, brave).
- Act out the feeling.
- Draw "someone helping someone".



SHOW CONNECTION

This lesson links to early moments in *The Secret Elephant* where Dani supports Nessie through fear and uncertainty.

Pupils will recognise these themes of bravery and kindness if they see the show.



LESSON 2 – MIGRATION & MAPS

Suitable for 2nd–6th Class



LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To understand long-distance journeys, explore migration, and develop map-reading skills.

CURRICULUM LINKS (IRELAND)



SESE Geography

- Identify continents and oceans
- Explore reasons why animals move or migrate
- Use simple maps and directional language



Language (Oral Language & Comprehension)

- Discuss information presented in visual form
- Ask and answer questions about a journey



STORY EXTRACT (to set the scene)

Nessie: "Dani... what's that?"

Steven: "It was a map...
drifting closer on the waves."

SUMMARY:

After the cliff jump, Dani and Nessie find a map floating in the water. It shows a route from Africa across the Indian Ocean all the way to Australia.



STARTER (10 MINUTES)

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE?

1. Show pupils a simple world map.
2. Ask them to locate:
 - Africa
 - The Indian Ocean
 - Australia
3. Discuss:
 - How far apart are these places?
 - How might an animal travel such a long distance?



MAIN ACTIVITY (20–25 MINUTES)

1. Exploring the Journey

Discuss:

- Why Dani and Nessie might need to travel
- What dangers or challenges they might face
- How maps help us understand journeys

2. Younger Classes (2nd–3rd Class)

Task — Draw the Journey

Pupils:

1. Draw a simple map with:
 - Africa
 - The ocean
 - Australia
2. Add a dotted line showing Dani and Nessie's journey.
3. Add one thing they might see on the way (a fish, a wave, a cloud).



3. Older Classes (4th–6th Class)

Task — Annotated Migration Map

Pupils create a labelled map including:

- Continents and oceans
- A migration route
- A key/legend
- Short notes explaining why animals migrate (food, safety, climate)



KEY / LEGEND

- Migration route
- Continents
- Oceans

WHY ANIMALS MIGRATE

- Food
- Safety
- Climate



PLENARY (5 MINUTES)

Ask pupils:

- What surprised you about the journey?
- Why might animals travel so far?
- How does a map help us understand a story?



OLDER CLASSES EXTENSION

Research a real migrating animal (e.g., humpback whale, monarch butterfly, Arctic tern) and compare its journey to Dani and Nessie's.



OPTIONAL 1ST CLASS ADAPTATION

Use a floor map or large printed map.

Children walk the route from Africa to Australia using a dotted line.



SHOW CONNECTION

This lesson links to the moment in *The Secret Elephant* when Dani and Nessie discover the map that will guide them across the ocean to Australia.



LESSON 3 – COURAGE & SUPPORT

Suitable for 2nd–6th Class



LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To explore courage, understand how characters support one another, and reflect on moments when we need help.

CURRICULUM LINKS (IRELAND)



SPHE / Wellbeing

- Identifying and managing feelings
- Understanding how support helps us cope
- Recognising bravery in everyday situations



Language (Oral Language & Comprehension)

- Discussing character motivations
- Responding to emotional moments in a story

STORY EXTRACT (to set the scene)

Nessie: "Dani... I'm scared."

Dani: "It's okay. We're not staying."

SUMMARY:

At the watering hole, Dani reassures Nessie as danger approaches. Dani stays calm and protective, helping Nessie feel safe.



STARTER (10 MINUTES)

WHAT DOES BRAVERY LOOK LIKE?

1. Ask pupils to show "brave", "worried", "determined", "protective" using body language.
2. Discuss how bravery doesn't always mean being fearless.
3. Ask:
 - When have you been brave?
 - Who helped you feel safe?



MAIN ACTIVITY (20–25 MINUTES)

1. Exploring Courage in the Story

Discuss:

- Why Nessie is scared
- How Dani supports her
- How support can make us feel braver



2. Younger Classes (2nd–3rd Class)

Task — Draw Someone Helping Someone

Pupils:

1. Draw Dani helping Nessie.
2. Add speech bubbles showing what they might say.
3. Write one sentence:
"Dani helps Nessie by..."



Dani helps Nessie by...



3. Older Classes (4th–6th Class)

Task — Courage & Support Reflection Sheet

Pupils complete a short reflection:

- When have I felt nervous or unsure?



- Who supported me?



- What did they do that helped?



- How can I support someone else who feels worried?



PLenary (5 MINUTES)

Ask pupils:

- What does courage mean to you?
- How can we show support to others?
- Why is kindness important when someone is scared?



OLDER CLASSES EXTENSION

Write a short paragraph comparing Dani's courage to a real-life example of someone showing bravery.



OPTIONAL 1ST CLASS ADAPTATION

Children act out a simple scene where one character helps another feel brave.



SHOW CONNECTION

This lesson links to the moment in *The Secret Elephant* when Dani protects Nessie at the watering hole, showing courage and reassurance.



LESSON 4 – DRAMA: STEPPING INTO THE STORY

Suitable for 2nd–6th Class



LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To explore characters' thoughts, feelings, and motivations through drama techniques.

CURRICULUM LINKS (IRELAND)



Arts Education — Drama

- Exploring and making drama
- Cooperating and communicating in role
- Understanding characters and situations



Language (Oral Language)

- Speaking and listening in role
- Responding to imagined scenarios

STORY EXTRACT (to set the scene)

Dani: "Anything's possible."

SUMMARY:

Dani encourages Nessie as they face challenges together. Pupils explore this moment through drama, imagining what characters think, feel, and want.



DRAMA TECHNIQUES WORKSHEET

FREEZE-FRAME



Create a still image that shows an important moment in the story. What are the characters thinking or feeling?

HOT-SEATING



One pupil is "in role" as a character. Others ask questions to find out what they are thinking, feeling or wanting.

IMPROVISED DIALOGUE



Pairs or small groups create a short scene with dialogue between characters. Use kind words, show support and solve a problem.



STARTER (10 MINUTES)

Character Corners

Choose a corner of the room for each character:



Dani



Nessie



Steven



Molly

Pupils move to the character they feel most connected to and explain why.



PLENARY (5 MINUTES)

Ask pupils:

- Which character did you understand better today?
- How did drama help you explore their feelings?
- What might happen next in the story?



OLDER CLASSES EXTENSION

Write a short script (6–8 lines) imagining a new scene where Dani and Nessie face a challenge together.



OPTIONAL 1ST CLASS ADAPTATION

Children act out simple emotions (happy, scared, brave, excited) using movement and facial expression.



SHOW CONNECTION

This lesson links to moments throughout *The Secret Elephant* where characters must make brave choices and support one another.



MAIN ACTIVITY (20–25 MINUTES)

1. Freeze-Frames

In small groups, create freeze-frames showing:

- Dani encouraging Nessie
- A moment of danger
- A moment of hope

Discuss what each character might be thinking.



2. Hot-Seating

One pupil sits "in role" as Dani, Nessie, Steven, or Molly.

Others ask questions such as:

- "What are you worried about?"
- "What do you want to happen next?"
- "How do you feel about the journey?"

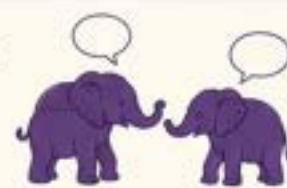


3. Improvised Dialogue

Pairs create a short improvised scene where one character supports another.

Encourage:

- kind language
- bravery
- empathy



LESSON 5 – SYMBOLISM & CARVINGS

Suitable for 2nd–6th Class



LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To explore the meaning of symbols, understand how carvings can tell stories, and create symbolic artwork inspired by the show.



Visual Arts

- Drawing and responding to visual stimuli
- Exploring line, shape, pattern, and symbolism



Language (Oral Language)

- Discussing meaning and interpretation
- Describing visual features

STORY EXTRACT (to set the scene)

Steven - Extraordinary... absolutely extraordinary. There must be something I'm missing...

SUMMARY:

Popular children's author Steven Lee discovers a mysterious red stone carving of Dani the Elephant. Its patterns and glow suggest a deeper meaning connected to a magical story just waiting to be uncovered.



STARTER (10 MINUTES)

What Is a Symbol?

1. Show pupils simple symbols (heart, star, wave, sun).
2. Ask:
 - What do these symbols mean?
 - How can pictures tell stories without words?
3. Discuss how the red carving might be a symbol in the story.



MAIN ACTIVITY (20–25 MINUTES)

1. Exploring the Carving

Discuss:

- What shapes or patterns can you see?
- What might the carving represent?
- How might it help Dani and Nessie?



2. Younger Classes (2nd–3rd Class)

Task — Create Your Own Symbol

Pupils:

1. Draw a simple symbol that represents:
 - bravery
 - friendship
 - hope
2. Add colour and pattern.
3. Write one sentence: "My symbol means..."



My symbol means...

3. Older Classes (4th–6th Class)

Task — Story Carving Design Sheet

Pupils design a carving that tells part of Dani and Nessie's journey.

Include:

- shapes or patterns that represent emotions
- lines showing movement or travel
- colours that show mood
- a short explanation of the meaning



PLENARY (5 MINUTES)

Ask pupils:

- What symbols did you create?
- How can symbols help tell a story?
- Why might the carving be important to Dani and Nessie?



OLDER CLASSES EXTENSION

Write a short paragraph explaining how your carving could guide Dani and Nessie on their journey.



OPTIONAL 1ST CLASS ADAPTATION

Children create a simple "friendship symbol" using shapes and colours.



SHOW CONNECTION

This lesson links to the moment in *The Secret Elephant* when Steven discovers a mysterious red stone carving that hints at an impossible story ahead.



LESSON 6 — ANIMALS, HABITATS & SURVIVAL

Suitable for 2nd–6th Class



LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To explore different habitats, understand how animals survive in changing environments, and compare features that help animals adapt.



CURRICULUM LINKS (IRELAND)

SESE Science

- Exploring habitats and the animals that live in them
- Understanding how animals adapt to survive
- Identifying similarities and differences between environments

Language (Oral Language & Comprehension)

- Discussing information from images and text
- Asking and answering questions about animals and habitats



STORY EXTRACT (to set the scene)

Steven (narrating) Dani and Nessie walked all night.
Away from the logging camp.
Away from the shouting humans.
Away from the chains.
And when the sun finally rose, they found themselves back on the open plains – free again.

SUMMARY:

Dani and Nessie journey across different habitats – plains, ocean and coastline – each with unique challenges and wildlife.



STARTER (10 MINUTES)

What Is a Habitat?

- Show pupils pictures of different habitats (savannah, ocean, forest, desert).
- Ask:
 - What animals live here?
 - What do they need to survive?
- Discuss how Dani and Nessie travel through more than one habitat.



PLENARY (5 MINUTES)

Ask pupils:

- What surprised you about different habitats?
- How do animals adapt to survive?
- What challenges did Dani and Nessie face on their journey?



OLDER CLASSES EXTENSION

Research an endangered animal and explain how habitat loss affects its survival.



OPTIONAL 1ST CLASS ADAPTATION

Children sort picture cards into "savannah animals" and "ocean animals".

SAVANNAH ANIMALS

OCEAN ANIMALS



SHOW CONNECTION

This lesson links to the moments in *The Secret Elephant* where Dani and Nessie travel through different habitats, learning to survive and stay brave together.



VOCABULARY

- habitat
- adaptation
- survive
- environment
- challenge
- journey



MAIN ACTIVITY (20–25 MINUTES)

1. Exploring Habitats

Discuss:

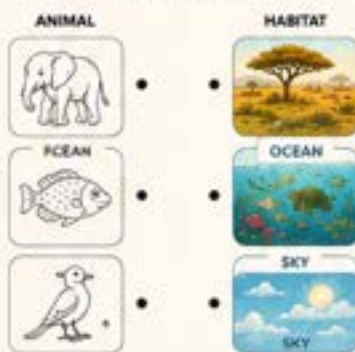
- What dangers or challenges might animals face in each habitat?
- How do animals stay safe, find food, and protect themselves?
- How might Dani and Nessie feel in each new environment?

2. Younger Classes (2nd–3rd Class)

Task — Match the Animal to the Habitat

Pupils:

- Draw a line from each animal to its habitat.
- Colour the animals.
- Write one sentence: "This animal lives in the _____ because..."



✓ This animal lives in the _____ because...

3. Older Classes (4th–6th Class)

Task — Adaptation & Survival Sheet

Pupils complete a short research-style activity:

- Choose one habitat from the story
- List animals that live there
- Describe features that help them survive (e.g., trunk, fins, wings, camouflage)
- Explain how Dani and Nessie might adapt if they lived there

Habitat I chose: _____

Animals that live there: _____

Features that help them survive: _____

How Dani and Nessie might adapt in this habitat: _____



FINAL REFLECTION — BELONGING & GOODBYE

Suitable for 2nd–6th Class



LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To reflect on the themes of belonging, bravery, and friendship explored throughout the story and lessons.



CURRICULUM LINKS (IRELAND)

SPHE / Wellbeing

- Reflecting on personal growth
- Understanding belonging and connection
- Recognising emotions and relationships

Language (Oral Language & Writing)

- Expressing personal responses
- Reflecting on themes and characters



STORY EXTRACT (to set the scene)

Steven: "They had found their place... and each other."

SUMMARY:

After a long journey, Dani and Nessie discover safety, belonging, and a sense of home. Pupils reflect on their own experiences of belonging and bravery.



REFLECTION ACTIVITY (Whole Class or Individual)

1 What Does Belonging Mean to You?

Discuss:

- Where do you feel most at home?
- Who helps you feel safe or welcome?
- What does it mean to belong?



2 Younger Classes (2nd–3rd Class)

Task — My Special Place

Pupils draw a place where they feel safe or happy.

Add one sentence:

"I belong when..."



I belong when...

3 Older Classes (4th–6th Class)

Task — Journey of Belonging

Pupils write a short reflection:

A time I felt brave

A time someone helped me

A place where I feel I belong

What Dani and Nessie taught me about friendship



PLENARY (5 MINUTES)

Ask pupils:

- What have you learned from Dani and Nessie's journey?
- How can we help others feel they belong?
- What does bravery look like in everyday life?



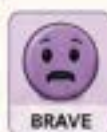
OLDER CLASSES EXTENSION

Write a short paragraph imagining what Dani and Nessie's life might be like now that they've found a place to belong.



OPTIONAL 1ST CLASS ADAPTATION

Children choose an emotion card and say one thing that helps them feel safe or happy.



SHOW CONNECTION

This final reflection links to the ending of *The Secret Elephant*, where Dani and Nessie find belonging, safety, and hope after their long journey.



VOCABULARY

- habitat
- adaptation
- survive
- environment
- challenge
- journey



CREDITS



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Education Pack Development

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Story & Characters

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Further Information

For more resources, workshops, and information
about our productions, visit:

www.ptc.org.uk



Thank You

Thank you for supporting theatre,
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