

A FAMILY STUDY IN THE CHARLOTTE MASON TRADITION

THE JUNGLE BOOK



by Rudyard Kipling

A Living Book Study for KS3, with a Years 5-6 Support Tier

Welcome. This Living Book Study of The Jungle Book is written for families teaching children of different ages side by side, with a core plan for Years 7-9 and a lighter-touch tier for Years 5-6.

In the Charlotte Mason tradition, we keep the feast wide alongside the stories: history, geography, science and thoughtful conversation sit next to poetry, drama and discussion. Choose what fits your family, do a little at a time, and let each child respond in their own way.

A few steady habits will support progress:

- For Years 5-6: enjoy the stories and their poems, and start noticing the 'Law of the Jungle' as it appears.
- For Years 7-9: collect every 'Law of the Jungle' rule as you meet it, and start thinking about what it suggests about order, respect and belonging.
- For Years 9-11: use the extension tasks to think critically about the book's colonial setting and Kipling's own complicated legacy.

How to use this plan

- Follow the suggested 4-week medium-term plan, or use the subject activity map to build your own route.
- Print the accompanying Learning Booklet for story-by-story reading and response tasks.
- Use the Independent Study slides if a student is working through the plan on their own.
- A note for parents: this collection is set in colonial India and reflects attitudes of its 1894 setting, including the assumptions of the British Raj. See the Extension section below for a way to open that conversation with older children.

About the Text

First published in 1894, The Jungle Book is a collection of seven stories, each followed by a poem. Three tell the story of Mowgli, a boy raised by wolves in the Indian jungle and taught the 'Law of the Jungle' by Baloo the bear and Bagheera the panther. The other four stand alone: an Alaskan fur seal searching for a safe home, a brave mongoose defending a family from cobras, a boy who witnesses a secret elephant ceremony, and army camp animals speaking on the eve of battle. Kipling's stories helped shape how generations of readers imagined the jungle - and his 'Law of the Jungle' has entered everyday language.

Text used: the 1894 first edition is out of copyright and freely available from Project Gutenberg and Standard Ebooks (see Helpful Websites, below).

Topics included: History (British colonial India, Kipling's life), Science/Nature (wolf packs, fur seals, mongooses and cobras, elephants), Geography (India, the Bering Sea), Art (jungle animals, the elephant dance), Drama (the Law of the Jungle, Rikki-Tikki's fight with Nag), and Poetry (the seven poems that accompany the stories).

Years 5-6 Support Tier

Younger children can enjoy these vivid stories and their poems without needing to engage with the deeper historical and critical discussion aimed at older students.

Activity	Learning Areas	Description	Resources
Animal mask making	Art + Imaginative Play	Make simple masks for Mowgli's jungle friends - Baloo, Bagheera, Kaa - and act out a favourite scene.	Paper plates, elastic, craft materials
Law of the Jungle poster	Literacy + Art	Choose three simple rules from the Law of the Jungle and illustrate them as a poster for your room.	Paper/card, pens
Rikki-Tikki puppet show	Drama + Fine Motor	Make simple sock or paper-bag puppets for Rikki-Tikki, Nag and Nagaina, and act out the story.	Socks or paper bags, craft materials
Jungle small world	Storytelling + Fine Motor	Build a jungle scene in a tray with toy animals and plants; retell a story you've read.	Tuff tray, toy animals, greenery
Elephant footprint art	Art + Science	Research how big an elephant's footprint really is, then paint or draw one to scale.	Large paper, paint, measuring tape

KS3 Subject Activity Map

Literacy:

- Collect every 'Law of the Jungle' rule as you meet it across the three Mowgli stories, and discuss what each one teaches.
- Compare Kipling's narrative styles across the seven stories - some are told with a warm, storytelling voice, others more seriously.
- Choose a poem from the collection and discuss what it adds to the story it follows.
- Write your own short 'law' or rule in Kipling's style, for a group or place you know well.
- Track Mowgli's growth across his three stories - how does he change from 'Mowgli's Brothers' to 'Tiger! Tiger!'?

History:

- Research British colonial India (the Raj) in the late 19th century, when Kipling was writing.

- Research Rudyard Kipling's own life - born in Bombay, sent to school in England as a child, and later the youngest ever winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature (1907).
- Research the real use of elephants in Indian logging camps, as shown in 'Toomai of the Elephants'.
- Research the British Indian Army in the Victorian era, and the real role of animals in military logistics, linked to 'Her Majesty's Servants'.
- Record key dates into your Book of Centuries.

Science / Nature:

- Research real wolf pack behaviour and compare it to Kipling's version in the Mowgli stories.
- Research fur seals and the history of seal hunting in the Bering Sea and North Pacific, linked to 'The White Seal'.
- Research mongooses and their real relationship with cobras and other snakes, linked to 'Rikki-Tikki-Tavi'.
- Research elephant intelligence and behaviour.

Geography:

- Map the Indian jungle settings of the Mowgli stories, 'Rikki-Tikki-Tavi' and 'Toomai of the Elephants'.
- Map the Bering Sea and North Pacific for 'The White Seal', and trace Kotick's journey to find a safe island.

Art:

- Illustrate a scene from any of the seven stories.
- Draw the secret elephant dance that Toomai witnesses.
- Design a poster showing the animal cast of the Mowgli stories, in role (Baloo the teacher, Bagheera the protector, Kaa the hunter).

Drama:

- Perform the scene where Baloo and Bagheera rescue Mowgli from the Bandar-log.
- Act out Rikki-Tikki-Tavi's fight with Nag.
- Read the 'Law of the Jungle' aloud as a formal recitation.

Years 9-11 Extension:

- Kipling is a famously complicated figure - celebrated as a storyteller, but also the author of 'The White Man's Burden', a poem that helped justify empire. Discuss: does knowing this change how you read The Jungle Book?
- Some readers see the 'Law of the Jungle' as more than a story rule - as a reflection of ideas about hierarchy, order and 'civilising' rule that were common in the age of empire. Plan a response to: 'How does the Law of the Jungle reflect the ideas of the time it was written?'
- Compare the different narrative perspectives across the seven stories - what unifies the collection thematically, despite such different settings and characters?
- Research Kipling's own childhood, including being sent to England as a young child under the care of strangers - a common practice for colonial families - and discuss how this might have shaped his writing about belonging and displacement.

Possible Medium-Term Plan (4 Weeks)

The collection has seven stories, each followed by a poem: *Mowgli's Brothers*, *Kaa's Hunting*, and *'Tiger! Tiger!'* (the Mowgli trilogy), then *The White Seal*, *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi*, *Toomai of the Elephants*, and *Her Majesty's Servants*.

Week 1 - The Mowgli Trilogy

Day	Read	Core Task	Extension / Cross-curricular
Day 1	Mowgli's Brothers, and the poem Hunting-Song of the Seeonee Pack.	Narration: how is Mowgli adopted into the wolf pack? What is the Law of the Jungle, as introduced here?	Poetry: read the Hunting-Song aloud - what does it tell us about wolf pack life?
Day 2	Kaa's Hunting, and the poem Road-Song of the Bandar-Log.	Discuss: why are the Bandar-log (monkeys) considered outcasts in the jungle? What does this story teach about showing off?	Poetry: compare the playful tone of the Bandar-Log song to the serious Law of the Jungle.
Day 3	'Tiger! Tiger!', and the poem Mowgli's Song.	Discuss: how does Mowgli's story end in this first trilogy? What does it mean for him to return to human society?	Writing: write Mowgli's feelings as he leaves the jungle for the village.
Day 4	Response day - no new reading.	Collect every 'Law of the Jungle' rule mentioned across the three Mowgli stories in a list.	History: research real wolf pack behaviour and compare it to Kipling's version.

Week 2 - The White Seal and Rikki-Tikki-Tavi

Day	Read	Core Task	Extension / Cross-curricular
Day 5	The White Seal (first half).	Narration: how is Kotick different from the other seal pups?	Geography: research the real geography of Bering Sea and North Pacific seal colonies.
Day 6	The White Seal (second half), and the poem Lukannon.	Discuss: what makes Kotick a different kind of hero compared to Mowgli?	Science: research the real history of fur seal hunting and conservation.
Day 7	Rikki-Tikki-Tavi (first half).	Narration: describe Rikki-Tikki's character and courage.	Science: research mongooses and their real relationship with snakes.
Day 8	Rikki-Tikki-Tavi (second half), and the poem Darzee's Chant.	Discuss: how does Kipling build tension in the final confrontation with Nagaina?	Discuss: this story is set in a British colonial household in India - what does it show us about that setting?

Week 3 - Toomai of the Elephants and Her Majesty's Servants

Day	Read	Core Task	Extension / Cross-curricular
Day 9	Toomai of the Elephants (first half).	History: research the use of elephants in the working life of colonial India, including logging camps.	Discuss: what is Toomai's dream, and why does everyone think it's impossible?
Day 10	Toomai of the Elephants (second half), and the poem Shiv and the Grasshopper.	Narration: describe the elephant dance Toomai witnesses. Why is this such an extraordinary honour?	Art: illustrate the elephant dance scene.
Day 11	Her Majesty's Servants.	Discuss: this story is told through the eyes of army camp animals on the eve of battle. What does each animal's attitude to their work reveal?	History: research the British Indian Army, and the real role of animals in military logistics.
Day 12	The poem Parade Song of the Camp Animals.	Poetry: read the poem aloud, giving each animal its own voice.	Discuss: how does this final story and poem differ in tone from the Mowgli stories?

Week 4 - Response and Extension

Day	Read	Core Task	Extension / Cross-curricular
Day 13	Response day - no new reading.	Compare all seven stories in a table: setting, main character, and theme.	Discuss: which story did you enjoy most, and why?
Day 14	Extension day - no new reading.	Research Kipling's life and the colonial context of the book. Discuss what you find, using the Years 9-11 Extension tasks above.	Book of Centuries: record key dates.
Day 15	Wrap-up - no new reading.	Writing: write your own short story or 'law' inspired by Kipling's style, set in a place of your choosing.	Share your writing aloud with your family.

Helpful Websites

- Full text (free, out of copyright): Project Gutenberg - www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/236 and Standard Ebooks - standardebooks.org
- British colonial India (the Raj): The British Library - www.bl.uk
- Rudyard Kipling's life: Kipling Society - www.kiplingsociety.co.uk
- Wolf pack behaviour: The Wildlife Trusts - www.wildlifetrusts.org
- Fur seal history and conservation: NOAA Fisheries - www.fisheries.noaa.gov

Glossary

- English Journal: a notebook where thoughts and images are kept while reading a novel. You can also use the printable booklet.
- Book of Centuries: a timeline in a book, taken from the Charlotte Mason tradition, where children add historical figures and important dates as they meet them.
- The Raj: the period of direct British rule in India, from 1858 to 1947 - the historical setting for most of these stories.
- Law of the Jungle: the code of rules governing the animals in the Mowgli stories, covering hunting, respect and behaviour.

Other Living Book Studies in the Series

- Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll (Year 5-7)
- The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett
- Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson
- A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens (Year 7-9, GCSE extension)
- The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson (GCSE)