

# the Befana drama

## EDUCATION PACK



### Introduction

This education pack has been developed to enable Key Stage 2 teachers to use the exciting and enthralling children's novel, *The Befana Drama*, within the classroom, making it not only a thrill at story time, but also a focus for other activities.

The Befana Drama is a global adventure by broomstick, full of magic, mayhem and mirth and witch-dust of the most wondrous kind. It combines the Christmas folklore of Italy and much of Western Europe, North America and Australasia and adds new twists to it. It is gripping, humorous, touching and full of unexpected incidents. It is an ideal story to use around either Halloween or Christmas, though its round-the-world plot is one that can be enjoyed at any time.

**The book can be used as a classroom tool in the subject areas of:**

- 🌀 Geography
- 🌀 Science
- 🌀 Art & Design
- 🌀 English
- 🌀 Maths
- 🌀 Modern Languages
- 🌀 Citizenship

We have ideas for you in each of these areas.

Some of you will be teaching in schools in areas where there is a strong Italian heritage. This will add a new dimension to the story for your class.

You can buy *The Befana Drama* online at Amazon, ask your local bookshop if they stock it, or contact us directly at [giannah@me.com](mailto:giannah@me.com) to buy at a discount. An e-book is also available online at Amazon, Kobo and Lulu.

We hope you will find this education pack a useful source of information and ideas. We would love to have pictures or feedback from you, which we could share with other schools on our social media pages. Please send us your material by email to [giannah@me.com](mailto:giannah@me.com) or by post to Gianna Della Luna Publishing, The Keep, 30 Castle Avenue, Carleton, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire, FY6 7NW.



## Activity 1

The Befana Drama is a story that is staged in the following countries/locations:

Italy  
Dubai  
Germany  
Russia & Siberia  
Chicago/USA  
Iceland  
Lapland



### Ask your pupils to:

- Locate all these countries/locations on the map of the world.
- Find out a few key facts about each country/location: what is the capital?; what language is spoken?; what is the currency?; how hot or cold does it get in these places?; what types of food do the people there eat?

### Useful fact

1) Bef, the chief character in the book mentions eating polenta, pasta, pannacotta, ragu and risotto. Perhaps your pupils can learn more about traditional Italian cuisine and different pasta shapes and even make a piece of artwork out of pasta.

## Activity 2

Various famous landmarks are mentioned in The Befana Drama. Ask your pupils to find out more about some of these, draw them, or discover their history. Landmarks mentioned include:

- The Tower of Pisa – what is it famous for? Why is it leaning?
- Mount Etna & Mount Vesuvius – what is a volcano? What makes one erupt?
- The Trevi Fountain – when was it built? Who designed it? Where is it located?
- The Willis Tower – where is it? What is it famous for?
- The Pyramids – why were they built? In which country are they?
- The White House – where is it? What does it look like? Who lives there?
- Big Ben – where and what is it? When was it erected? Who designed it?

We are giving you some details here.





## Tower of Pisa

The Tower of Pisa is known as the Leaning Tower of Pisa and is located in Pisa, Italy. It leans to one side by 3.9 metres from the vertical. It has 296 steps to the top up one staircase and 294 on the other. It took 199 years to complete and nobody is sure who the architect was.

## Mount Etna

Mount Etna is one of the most active volcanoes in the world and the tallest active volcano in Europe. It is in an almost constant state of activity. It is the highest mountain in Italy south of the Alps and, in July 2013, became a World Heritage Site.

## Mount Vesuvius

This is another Italian volcano, this time located in the Gulf of Naples. In AD 79 it erupted and destroyed the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Stones and ash shot to a height of 20.5 metres and 16,000 people died as a result.

## The White House

This is the official residence of the President of the United States. Its official address is 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington DC. The first President of the US, George Washington, selected the site, but the first resident was John Adams, President in 1800. It has 132 rooms and is built on 6 levels. It has 412 doors, 147 windows, 35 'bathrooms' and just to please 'Bef', 28 fireplaces!

## The Willis Tower

This is the tallest building in the world if you count the masts on its roof. In terms of actual built structure without masts, however, the CN Tower in Toronto is taller. The Willis Tower was once known as the Sears Tower. It is located in Chicago, Illinois and was completed in 1973. It has an observation deck called The Skydeck.



## The Trevi Fountain

This famous fountain is located in Rome, the capital of Italy. The architect was Nicola Salvi, but it was completed by Pietro Bracci. There is a legend that says if you throw a coin into The Trevi, you are sure to return to Rome. 3000 Euros a week are thrown in and the money is used to subsidise a supermarket for the needy.

## The Pyramids

There are 138 pyramids in Egypt and most were tombs for the country's Pharaohs or their wives. The earliest was built 2630-2611 BC. The most famous are on the outskirts of Cairo, at Giza. The Pyramid of Khufu is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

## Big Ben

This is the nickname of the great bell of the clock at the North end of the Palace of Westminster in London. It is now officially called the Elizabeth Tower, since the 2012 Jubilee of Elizabeth II. The tower holds the largest four-faced chiming clock in the world. Big Ben may have been named (in 1856) after Sir Benjamin Hall, or after a famous boxer. Sixteen horses had to transport it to the tower and it took 18 hours to lift it into position.





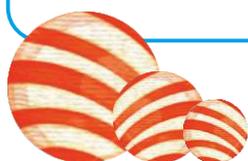
## Activity 3

### Useful fact

Lars Llangfjord, the best reindeer whisperer the world has ever seen, enters a Lapp village to help communicate to the Lapps that the reindeers' diet is being affected by acid rain.

Explore life in a Lapp village.

- What costumes do the Lapps wear?
- What is their daily life like?
- How much daylight do they enjoy at different times of year? What would it be like to live with just 2.5 hours of daylight in winter and then nearly 23 hours of daylight in summer?
- What do Lapps eat?
- What traditions do the Lapps have?





## Activity 1

### Habitats & Adaptation

The Befana Drama is a global adventure covering a wide range of different climates, which produce differing habitats. These are home to an array of creatures, which have to adapt to survive in their habitat.

Even Bef has to adapt, by visiting Jeremiah Needlebaum to get warm, furry clothing in which to cross the Arctic. So how does wildlife adapt? Consider these three creatures mentioned in The Befana Drama.

#### Polar Bear

**Polar Bears live in the Arctic. You will find them in five different countries: the USA (Alaska), Canada, Russia, Greenland and Norway. The USA listed it as a Threatened Species in 2008 and it is a species of concern in Russia and Canada.**

**They live in temperatures that can be as low as -45 degrees Celsius. The sea ice environments in which they live are being rapidly destroyed thanks to climate change.**

#### Arctic Fox

**The Arctic Fox lives in some of the coldest climates on the planet, which can reach -50 degrees Celsius. This creature is found throughout the Arctic tundra, through Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Russia, Norway, Scandinavia and Iceland. It is actually Iceland's only native land mammal.**

**Its habitat is barren and rocky, with little vegetation.**

#### Reindeer

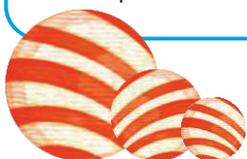
**Reindeer live in cold Arctic and sub-Arctic forest climates. Living on ice and snow is not easy and the reindeer are constantly trying to find new pastures and food, moving to summer feeding grounds and then back to the forests in autumn, to find shelter from cold winter storms and food under the snow. In warm wather, they climb mountain slopes to enjoy cool snow at a higher altitude.**

### References in The Befana Drama:

“Those polar bears can be very vicious you know. One scent of a witch and they'll be on the hunt, as you witches have a very unique smell.” p158

“Once they had eaten and done a final security check of his cabin - something Lars insisted upon, as he didn't trust the Arctic foxes ....” (p 219)

There are numerous references to reindeer, often in relation to Lars Llangfjord, the best reindeer whisperer the world has ever seen. Working with the reindeer is a crucial part of Bef's plan to retain the hearts of her Italian children.





## Adaptations

### Polar Bear

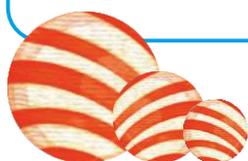


The polar bear has two layers of fur to keep it warm and a thick layer of fat (blubber) which is up to 11cm thick. This could actually cause overheating, so to prevent this, the bear moves slowly and rests frequently. Any excess heat is released in areas where there is no fur, or where blood vessels are close to the skin. This is the case with the nose, ears, foot, pads, shoulders and inner thighs. The polar bear can also take a dip to cool down!

The creature's body is also adapted in such a way as to reduce heat loss. Polar bears have compact ears and a small tail. Small, rounded ears also prevent the bear from getting frozen eardrums, as water cannot enter the ear.

The skin beneath the bear's white fur is actually black. This allows the animal to retain heat. White fur has the advantage of camouflaging the bear when hunting its prey. The polar bear will even cover its black nose with its paws to make hunts more successful!

Hollow fur traps air inside it, so the bear is buoyant in water. The polar bear is a strong swimmer and can swim as far as 100km without resting. This allows them to catch prey.





## Polar Bear (Continued)

Prey is also hunted on land. The polar bear's feet have long, stiff hair between the pads and small bumps called papillae. This protects the bear from the cold and prevents slipping on the ice. It also helps them in the water and the hair usually allows the bear to shake off any water or ice following a swim.

Polar bears have a powerful sense of smell and can detect seals from afar. They possess powerful claws, which can haul a seal out of the water very easily. Feeding on seals provides them with seal fat, which is the highest calorie food source they could have. This helps build up the polar bear's fat reserves. They can also dig dens several metres deep and shelter from harsh winds.

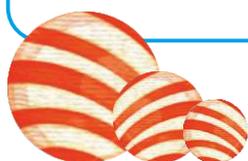
## Arctic Fox



Arctic foxes have deep, thick fur and a good supply of body fat, which allows them to keep warm. With a rounded body, short, very furry and round ears and short legs, there is less of its surface area exposed to the cold. This means that less heat leaves its body. Its deep, thick fur allows it to keep its body temperature at a consistent level.

Like the polar bear, the Arctic fox has furry paws to allow for easier walking on ice. It has a very strong sense of hearing, assisted by wide, front-facing ears and these factors allow it to identify exactly where its prey may be hidden under the snow. When it finds food, it punches through the snow to catch it. Lemmings are its main food source.

The fox's colour changes according to season. In the winter, it is white, so it can blend into the snow. In summer, it is a reddish-brown colour, so it merges easily into summer habitats.





## Reindeer



Reindeer have many unique adaptations. The first is a coat that offers good insulation against the cold. Hollow hairs fit tight against their body, trapping heat. This also helps keep them buoyant in water, assisting their swimming. Their fur also prevents any falling snow melting on their back.

Reindeer are blessed with large hooves that help them walk on snow and soft tundra. The foot pads shrink in winter and harden. Fur covers them and acts like a snowshoe, to assist walking on snow and ice.

Reindeer can travel further than any other land animal, moving up to 5000 km a year. They can also run at a speed of up to 48mph and swim at 6mph.

It is thought that they gather together as a group in summer to fend off mosquitoes and flies.

Like polar bears, reindeer have a great sense of smell and they can use their hooves to reach buried food. Their eyesight and hearing is not very well developed, but they are able to communicate through vocal noises, such as snorting, grunting and bawling and through visual and chemical means.

Unlike other species of deer, both males and females possess antlers. This helps keep predators away.

Reindeer can store their food as fat and use up the reserves in the winter months when there is less food available. They can also heat air in the nose, before it enters their lungs. This allows them to retain heat.

They are herbivores, so graze on lichens that are able to survive in harsh climates by growing on rock and thin soils. Other food sources can be lemmings, bird eggs and mushrooms.





## Activity 2



The final chapters of *The Befana Drama* take place in Lapland. This is a great place to see the phenomenon known as the Northern Lights or Aurora Borealis, which you and your class could discuss.

This is a riot of colour which breaks out across the sky in dancing waves of red, blue and violet. It is created by high energy protons and electrons from sun-spots, which are transported by a solar wind and then trapped in the Earth's magnetic field. Red and green colours emerge when these particles collide with oxygen atoms. The blue shades are created when the particles collide with nitrogen molecules.

These lights once caused much fear among observers. Some said they were caused by an Arctic fox running and creating sparks that flew into the air. Others thought they were related to dragons.

After showing your class pictures of the Northern Lights, you could ask them to create a piece of art that depicts them.

**Useful fact**

**In *The Befana Drama*, Santa's vain wife, Capriccia, has her own hair accessories called Northern Highlights, which change colour throughout the day according to the light and her mood!**





## Activity 1

There are lots of larger-than-life characters in The Befana Drama. Ask your pupils to draw one of the following. We have helped by listing some of their characteristics.

### Bernhardt Bürstenfrisür

- Tiny
- No more than 3 feet tall
- Has amazing hair that sticks straight up in the air around 18 inches – a little like a toilet brush!
- Hair is streaked ginger, black & forest brown
- Wears red & white pyjama bottoms
- His top half and face are greeny-brown
- He has wooden-framed spectacles
- He is a broom expert
- Can often look very angry!
- Likes to shake his fist.

### Jeremiah Needlebaum

- Tall & wiry
- Wears blue & yellow banded, knitted legwarmers
- Has a tunic that is purple at the top and tangerine at the bottom and which has red, puffed sleeves
- Wears bright red leather shoes
- His ears stick out at almost right angles
- His hat seems to be made of chicken wire and carries about 50 reels of different coloured cotton reels in 4 rows
- Has a bright red belt with pouches for needles, elastic, buttons and trimmings
- Has twinkling, hazel eyes and a kind face
- Has a short, stubbly beard

### Capriccia Claus

- Is very tall
- Has bright blue eyes
- Is quite skinny and scrawny
- Has many clothes, but has one outfit that is a red cape twinned with white fur, red hotpants and black, furry boots
- Has long, blonde hair that reaches right down her back.
- Has a massive shoe collection
- Has the longest dressing table in the world
- She likes to scream and whirl herself around like a tornado!
- She lives in a five-storey tall bright pink building with fuchsia coloured window frames.





## Activity 2

### Make a Broomstick

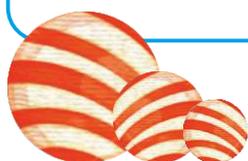
A simple broomstick can be made by using a lollipop stick as the handle and wrapping raffia around it.

Cut around 3-4 inches of raffia and fold it in half. Then stick the lollipop stick through it and secure the raffia with a bit of string, which should then be knotted. It really is that easy!

## Activity 3



Capriccia Claus has all sorts of shoes in her massive shoe collection. She even has some that are pink, orange and blue platform shoes decorated with dried reindeer droppings and others that are white stilettos with real bilberries growing on them. Ask your pupils to design a pair of shoes for Capriccia and use their imagination to the full to create something that will be 'oh so Capriccia'!





## Activity 1

Pick out some of the words within The Befana Drama that your pupils may not necessarily know. Ask them to look them up in a dictionary, or ask them to find a synonym that has the same meaning.

## Activity 2

### Finishing a Story

In The Befana Drama there are lots of opportunities for your children to write a story along the lines of 'what happened next?'

Here are two suggestions for you:

- Bef and Gaspar fly to the USA leaving Jeremiah Needlebaum standing in the snow, with a tear rolling down his face and feeling very sad at the loss of human company (p160). What does Jeremiah do next? Does he go and make some acorn tea? Does he perhaps bake some seedies? Does he pack away the knitted dominoes? Or does he start to design and sew a new outfit?
- Bef and Gaspar leave Rocky Candymeister standing in the chocolate fountain. What does Rocky do next? Does he try to put his chocolate-covered wig back on his head? Does he leave a trail of chocolate right the way back to his office? Does he increase security? Does he lie down and try to recover? Or does he do something unusual such as designing a new sweet that looks like Bef? (Chapter 15)



### Writing an email

Pretend you are either the young man in the Internet Café, or one of the men in the street when the Befana flies into a rage and sends candy balls bouncing down the street. Write an e-mail to your friend describing what it sounded like, what it looked like, what you thought was happening and what you did to stay safe. (Chapter 3)

Or

Write a letter to a friend to describe what your town is like now the Befana has gone. Describe to them what it is like living with the dust, the shuffling shoes, the wailing cats and the whispering voice. Tell them how it affects your life when eating, going to school and living in your house. (Chapter 17)



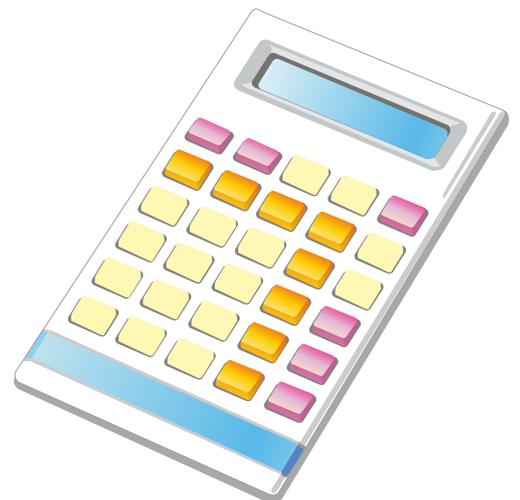


1. Old Father Time lives 1262 miles from Dubai. Subtract 100, 10 and 1 from this total. What figures do you get?  
  
Now add 100, 10 and 1 to 1262. What numbers do you get now?
2. Bef is the 93rd elf in Santa's Post Office. How many tens and how many 1s make up 93?
3. Bef is nearly foiled by the 81st elf. If you subtract 81 from 93 ( $93 - 81$ ) what is the answer?
4. The 81st elf is demoted and becomes the 66th elf. If you subtract 66 from 81 ( $81 - 66$ ) what is the answer?
5. When it is 9.30pm in Rome, it is 11.30am in Dubai. How many hours behind Rome is Dubai?
6. When it is 2.30pm in Chicago, it is 11.30pm in Moscow. How many hours ahead of people in Chicago are those living in Moscow?
7. If Capriccia has 636 pairs of shoes and Bef cleans a third of them, how many does Bef clean? (Divide 636 by 3 to find out).
8. Bef cleans 45 red shoes and 97 red and blue shoes altogether. How many blue shoes does this mean she cleans?
9. In English pounds, when Bef looks at a menu she sees the following drinks and prices:

Acorn tea	£0.90
Reindeer milk	£0.54
Cloudberry cordial	£1.76
Bilberry juice	£1.17
Cappuccino	£0.61

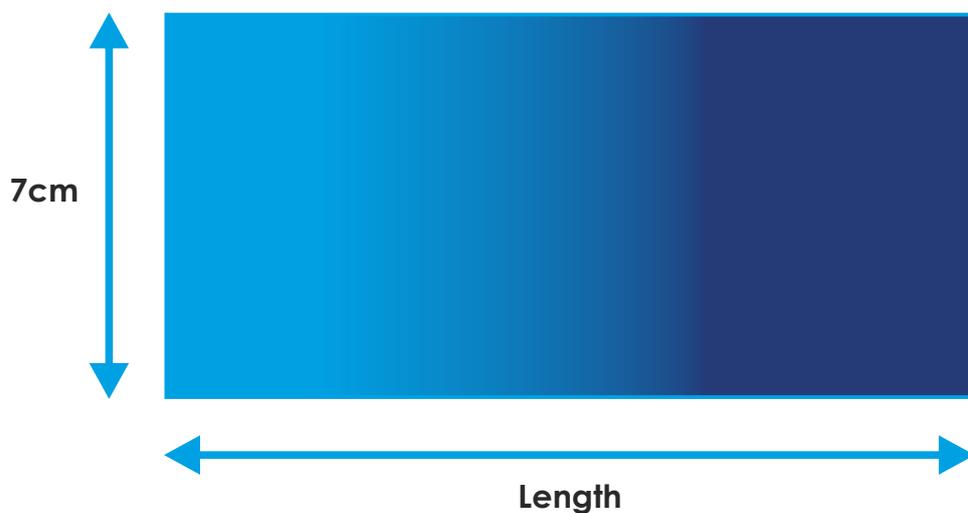
Put these in order of price, starting with the smallest.

Bef has £3.40 to spend and buys a cloudberry cordial and a cappuccino. How much money does she have left?



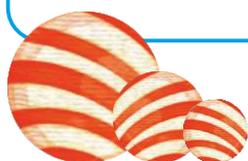


10. Here is a parcel in Santa's Wrapping Room.



The parcel is a rectangle. You have one measurement given for its width. The perimeter of the rectangular package is 50cm. What is its length?

11. A hundred cats have gathered by the Church in Bef's village. The following day three times as many are there. How many are there that day?
12. In Santa's Post Office, there are three presents. Parcel C weighs the same as Parcel A & B together. Together, they weigh 900g. If Parcel C weighs 550 grams, how much does Parcel A weigh?



# Modern Languages



There are a few Italian words used in The Befana Drama. Teach your class what they mean.

<b>Buongiorno</b>	Hello, good day
<b>Arrivederci</b>	Goodbye
<b>Ciao</b>	Goodbye; see you
<b>Una piazza</b>	A square (in a town centre)
<b>Una scopa</b>	A broom
<b>Tutti</b>	Everyone
<b>Pazzo</b>	Mad/crazy
<b>Stupido</b>	Stupid
<b>Andiamo!</b>	Let's go!
<b>Il carbone</b>	Coal
<b>Le caramelle</b>	Sweets
<b>Favoloso!</b>	Fabulous!
<b>Pazienza!</b>	Be patient!



# Citizenship



The Room of Really Special Rewards at Santa's village contains ten huge bottles that look like bottles of perfume. Each is a special gift that children can secretly be given.

Discuss with your pupils why each gift can be more valuable than a computer game or expensive toy. The 'special rewards' are:

- Kindness
- Generosity
- Politeness
- Consideration
- Helpfulness
- Selflessness
- Happiness
- Health
- Humour
- Wisdom



Ask your pupils to name people that they know who have these qualities. Ask them how these people make them feel. Discuss how being kind, or thinking of others can make you feel good inside. Touch on areas such as happiness v money.

## What other qualities matter?

You can extend the discussion on health by focusing on Santa's Spa, as described in Chapter 25. Why does Santa need to stay healthy? Why does keeping fit matter? In what ways can we all keep fit and healthy?

