

BANJO
ROBINSON

IN

SCHOOLS!



Banjo in Schools is a free resource. If you haven't already signed up,
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www.banjorobinson.com/schools-resources/



BANJO IN SCHOOLS! AT A GLANCE!



1. Personalise and read out Banjo's UK letter



3. Children write back to Banjo and post their letter under your desk



2. Enjoy the UK activity sheets and table materials

4. You write a note back in Banjo's voice on his headed paper



5. Then just personalise and read out Banjo's next letter... and continue the cycle!

Keep reading for:

1. How it works
2. A letter to your colleagues
3. Using Banjo in your classroom: an overview



Banjo in Schools: How it Works (FULL SCHEME)

Banjo Robinson is a magical cat who travels around the globe sending personalised letters and activity packs to children from each of his destinations.

Banjo's letters encourage a reply, resulting in a truly magical correspondence between child and cat!

In collaboration with children's author Sylvia Bishop and primary school teachers, the team at Banjo HQ has now created a **free school product** so that classrooms up and down the country can enjoy exploring the world with Banjo.

Banjo's school pack

- supports the KS1 Geography curriculum
- develops pleasure in reading
- encourages positive attitudes towards writing

Suggested structure

1. All resources are printed from banjorobinson.com/banjo-in-schools.
2. *Classroom World Map* is displayed on the wall.
3. Banjo's first letter, from the UK, is personalised by the teacher.
4. Banjo's UK letter is read out to the class who are provided with supporting materials to enhance their experience. Teacher has access to lesson plans and additional materials to accompany each letter.
5. Children are encouraged to write back to Banjo using the stationery provided and leave their letters in a designated classroom spot for secret collection by the United Paws Postal Service.
6. Pawprints around the edge of the *Classroom World Map* are coloured in by children when they have written their replies.
7. The next day, the children's replies have disappeared, and children believe they are on their way to Banjo.
8. Teacher can write a note from Banjo on *Headed Paper* to thank the class for their letters.
9. After a break of 1-2 weeks, the teacher personalises Banjo's letter from Uganda. **The personalised PS message can refer to class and school news, or things the children have asked in their letters to Banjo.**
10. The cycle continues with the final letter from Fiji. Once all three letters have been read, discussed and replied to, children can receive a **completion certificate** (see banjorobinson.com/banjo-in-schools).

Why use Banjo in your classroom?

Banjo's letters are aligned to the Geography KS1 curriculum, providing the perfect introduction to the seven continents, climate across the world, the countries within the UK, and key geographical vocabulary.

Banjo is the perfect way to promote reading and writing for pleasure. The National Curriculum states that children “should be taught to develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding.” With its focus on encouraging curiosity and imagination, the letters motivate children to consolidate and expand their vocabulary.

Accompanying lesson plans provide ideas for either short activities or more detailed lessons, with extension ideas and home learning opportunities. These have been devised by an experienced primary teacher and former inspector and former Ofsted inspector. The plans focus on quick and easy ideas, without the need to prepare lots of resources, giving you the flexibility to tie the letters into an established scheme of work or use them as a standalone hook.

Banjo's letters are written by acclaimed children's author, Sylvia Bishop (Erica's Elephant; The Bookshop Girl), ensuring high quality, rich and motivating texts.

Banjo promotes learning at home. Banjo Robinson's at-home product encourages parents to read and write letters with their children, talking about new places and words and sharing the joy of reading. This is proven to be vital in closing the disadvantage gap and enabling educational success (“The Reading Framework” DfE, July 2021). Further, the letters encourage children to compare their own experiences with Banjo's perspectives of different countries. This provides children opportunities to discuss diversity and to share family traditions with their class.

Tell your colleagues about Banjo

We've written a handy introduction about Banjo in Schools for you to pass on to your colleagues and others in the teaching community – turn to the next page for a printable/customisable version!

For additional support and questions, visit Dory at Banjo HQ: <https://banjorobinsonhelp.zendesk.com/hc/en-gb> or email heythere@banjorobinson.com





Dear Colleague,

Banjo Robinson has just launched a new, completely free resource for primary schools which can be adapted to each school's context and curriculum intent.

Using personalised letters from a magical, globetrotting cat as a starting point, the team has worked with teachers to create a wealth of **KS1 geography curriculum-aligned materials** which can be used as a hook within an existing scheme or as a standalone unit of work.

Banjo Robinson supports reading and writing for pleasure, and works with acclaimed children's authors to create high quality texts with rich vocabulary.

Banjo in Schools can be used across Years 1 and 2 with lesson plans and activities that can extend higher attainers and provide motivation for reluctant writers to write for a purpose. A mini version of this resource which can be used in Reception classrooms is also available.

If you would like further information and to explore the offering, please visit www.banjorobinson.com/banjo-in-schools.

I hope you like it!



USING BANJO'S letters with your class: AN OVERVIEW

Links to National Curriculum

English - Banjo's top priority is to develop...

- Pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding.
- Positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing.

Geography - Letters from Banjo will support pupils to:

- Name and locate the world's seven continents and five oceans.
- Name, locate and identify characteristics of the four countries and capital cities of the United Kingdom.
- Use basic geographical vocabulary to refer to key physical and human features.
- Understand geographical similarities and differences.
- Identify seasonal and daily weather patterns in the United Kingdom and the location of hot and cold areas of the world in relation to the Equator and the North and South Poles.
- Use world maps, atlases and globes to identify the United Kingdom and its countries, as well as the countries, continents and oceans studied at this key stage.

Key Vocabulary

See *Geographical Vocabulary* printable.

Resources

Print resources provided at banjorobinson.com/banjo-in-schools:

- *Classroom World Map*
- *Geographical Vocabulary List*
- 3x letters with accompanying *Lesson Plans* (1st = UK, 2nd = Uganda, 3rd = Fiji)
- *Reply Paper*, including a *Guided Reply Paper* version
- *DIY Envelope*
- *Headed Paper (to reply as Banjo!)*
- Activity sheets (General, UK, Uganda, Fiji), including an '*Individual World Map*' for each child.
- *Table Support Materials: Words & Questions* (UK, Uganda, Fiji)

Classroom materials:

- Extra paper
- Pens/ pencils
- Globe/ atlas
- Art/ construction materials

When & How Often

We recommend you engage with the letters and lesson plans once every two weeks (or split the content of each lesson plan into 2 shorter weekly sessions). This gives Banjo the time to see the world in between his letters. **Adding personalisation to each letter will help the children in your class to connect meaningfully with Banjo.** However, all classrooms are different so please use the resources in a way that best suits your children and teaching timetable!

To introduce Banjo

1. Start with the UK Letter

Banjo's first letter includes an introduction. If you want to know why Banjo is travelling the world, you can buy his background story from our website or watch it on YouTube https://youtu.be/I3_tp9xfA4k

2. Look at Classroom World Map and display it

Use this as an opportunity to find out prior knowledge. Consider using talk partners/ small group discussion or post it/ whiteboard responses to find out -

- What continents do you know? What countries can you name?
- Where would you like to travel in the world? Why?
- What questions would you want to ask a world-travelling cat?

3. Plan your responses to Banjo

Allocate a special place in the classroom, such as under your desk, where you will ask children to leave their replies. Explain that Banjo has told you that they will be collected by one of his animal friends at the UPPS (United Paws Postal Service) and delivered to Banjo - this really adds to the magical experience for the children. If you have a school pet or animals that you spot regularly on the school grounds (e.g. a robin or pigeon) it is great to tell the children that they will be the collector of letters on behalf of Banjo.

For each new letter

1. Personalise each letter before reading

- Write on your letter in the white fields (or type, if you have a PDF reader). You will need to write your class name and a PS message, pretending you are Banjo Robinson. This can refer to something the children are particularly interested in, achievements they have made together or something they have written in their replies from the previous letter.

Here's an example:



2. Read the letter to the class

- Give each table/ child the relevant *Words and Questions* support sheet for reference.
- Identify key terms. You could tick these off on our vocabulary list or you could ask a child or assistant to scribe key terms as you read; sorting them into physical and human features and adding to these for each new Banjo letter.
- Plot where Banjo is on your *Classroom World Map* and/or encourage children to colour in the area on their *Individual World Map*.
- Distribute activity sheets for individual or group work.
- Refer to the lesson plans for more detail and additional activity ideas.

3. Write your replies to Banjo's letter

There are many different ways you could choose to reply, and you might try different options for each letter, reducing the scaffolding as you go. For example:

- Use it as an opportunity for whole class shared writing; modelling letter writing, using key vocabulary and incorporating lots of the children's suggestions into one letter.
- Write to Banjo in small group guided writing sessions; allowing you to focus on group targets and differentiate by outcome.
- Encourage children to write replies independently, with a writing for pleasure focus.
- Children may choose to draw Banjo a picture or you can scribe their message.

4. Supporting children's replies:

- In each lesson plan there are prompt questions you can use to help structure children's replies.
- The *Table Support Materials: Words & Questions* include additional letter-writing prompts and sentence starters.
- The *Guided Reply paper* template can be used for those who need extra support.
- Encourage children to create and address their own envelope in which to place their reply.

5. After writing back:

- Ask children to leave their letters in the special place that you've agreed they'll be collected from.
- The *Classroom World Map* has paw print symbols in its margins. We suggest that each time a child writes a reply to Banjo, they can colour in a paw print.
- You can write a note from Banjo on the *Headed Paper* to thank your class for their letters before Banjo's next delivery arrives!

General ideas that can be used across the weeks or as enhancements

- Encourage children to write extra letters to Banjo by having a UPPS post box (which the children could make) in your special agreed place. This can be used by them to share worries or for them to reflect on their learning - telling or drawing pictures for Banjo about what they have been doing.
- Consider putting up a Banjo display: including the map, his letters as the children receive them, examples of their own written replies, drawings or paintings of Banjo. You could add key vocabulary, flags and also plot on the map all the places children come from or have a link to.
- Create a rucksack as a display, or use a real one, and pack it with items (real, photographed or drawn). Use it as an opportunity to learn about geographical items such as a passport, compass, travel tickets, aerial photographs and maps. Ask the children to consider different world climates and how this would change the clothes Banjo needs to pack.

At the end of the project

Don't forget to send home the *completion certificates* to congratulate each child for taking part and keeping Banjo company on his travels! Please check banjorobinson.com/banjo-in-schools for these.

