

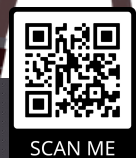


# Teaching Notes & Resources

Key Stage 2-3

Themes: Adventure | Magical worlds |  
Brain injury and memory loss | Epilepsy |  
Friendship | Courage

**Purchase Jayben and the Golden Torch**



# Introduction

## About the Book

**Can one boy with no memories save the world?**

In the Earth world, a boy dreams of faraway lands to escape life with his horrible aunt. In the Elf world, he wakes up with a mysterious golden torch but without any clue who he is ... except for the compass he pulls from his pocket, engraved with one name: JAYBEN.

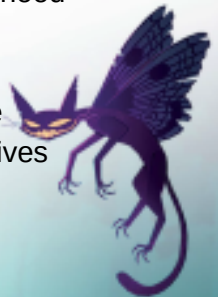
Jayben discovers that many moons ago, a giant put a dark spell on the golden torch, and the elves forgot everything that had come before. Now they hang precious memories in jars on trees, just to try to remember. But a new darkness grows among them...

An evil villain called Null is burning down the forests, hellbent on finding the torch and becoming the most powerful being ever to live. If Jayben can find his own magic and ignite the torch with its fierce violet flame, his power will be unstoppable...

## About the Author

At 19 years old Thomas Leeds was hit by a London black cab. Whilst he was lucky to survive, his childhood memories did not. Unable to remember the places he loved as a child or to recognise faces, including those of his family, Thomas set about building a new life. Without knowing where his beginning was, he began adjusting to a future that included navigating the severe epilepsy that resulted from his brain injury. 11 years later, creating an 80s playlist for his upcoming 30th birthday, Thomas heard the first line of the Waterboys' 'The Whole of the Moon' and his childhood memories began to emerge.

Thomas held on to those memories and with them came the seed of his debut middle-grade novel, exploring and championing the power of memory and epilepsy. Nowadays, Thomas lives in Essex with his wife (the only face he can remember) and his two daughters.



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Activities: Create your own memory jars.

Objectives: Consider the power of memory.

### Theme 2 – Support from Friends

Activities: Discuss the impact of epilepsy; pick out examples of supportive words and actions from the text.

Objectives: Begin to understand how epilepsy may affect those who live with it; discuss ways to help and support others.

### Theme 3 – The Missing Pages

Activities: Draw something you would like to do or achieve in your life.

Objectives: Consider dreams and goals for the future.

## Reflection Questions

## Wordsearch



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# Book Cover Prompts



1. What do you notice about the front cover? What does it make you feel/ think/ wonder?
2. Can you make any predictions about the story based on the front cover?
  3. Where do you think the book might be set?
  4. What genre do you think the book might fit within?
5. Does the front cover remind you of any other books you've read?



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# Theme 1 - The Book of Dreamers

In this extract, Larnie is reading aloud from *The Book of Dreamers* to Jayben, Tedrick and Phee...

*The Earth and the Elf World have a relationship that reaches far back in history. In the **Magic Ages**, the Energy flowed through the Golden Torch in both directions, allowing everyone in the Elf World and Earth World alike to remember, think and dream. Here, the Torch blazed day and night, with its dazzling violet flame.*

*But one dark day an angry giant took control of the Torch. He used a magic spell to put out the violet flame, only an invisible charge remained through the torch. And when the Torch is not lit with a fierce violet light, the Energy stream will only flow one way – to Earth.*

*The giant then hid the Torch away.*

*With the Torch now extinguished, Energy in the Elf World began to run out. The elves became forgetful. This worried their leaders. They began to use the trees to preserve jars of their memories and their history.*

*And so the five forests of the Elf World became the five **Memory Woods**.*

*Gradually, over time, the memories stored in the woods became less and less.*

*Elves forgot how to dream and so lost their old magic.*

*It was the end of the **Magic Ages**.*

*But there is hope. There is always hope. For a prophecy has been foretold. A prophecy of the Dreamers.*

- Chapter 6



## Discussion Questions

- What are the two worlds in the book?
- Why was the Golden Torch important during the Magic Ages?
- What did the angry giant do and what were the consequences?
- What do you think the word 'preserve' means in this context?
- Why did the elves lose their magic?
- What do you think a 'prophecy' might be?
- Summarise everything you have learnt from this extract in as few words as possible.



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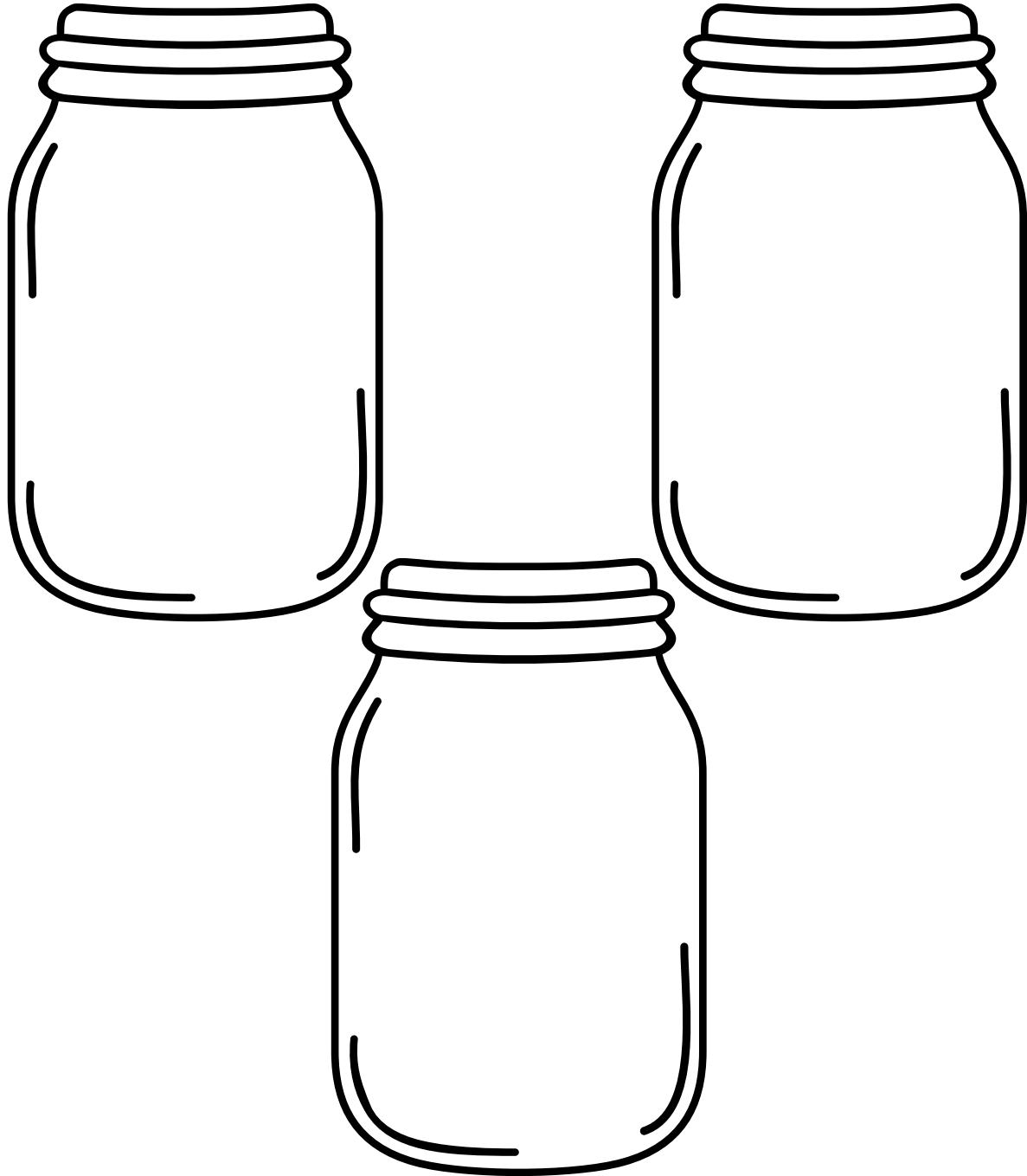
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# Theme 1 - The Book of Dreamers

## Activity: Memory Jars

Fill the memory jars below with precious memories of your own. Perhaps you have memories of a fun day out with your friends or family, a brilliant birthday party or your best day at school? Draw pictures and write descriptions of your most treasured memories!



Share your memory jars with a friend and describe your memories. Can you explain why these memories are important to you?



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# Theme 2 - Support from Friends

Read Chapter 12 of *Jayben and the Golden Torch*



## Discussion Questions

- What happens to Jayben towards the end of the chapter?
- Copy down any words that show how Jayben feels
- Can you find four questions that Jayben asks (either out loud or in his head)?
- Why do you think the author has included the blank page on page 148?
- What does the phrase 'reading his expression' mean? What does it tell us about Phee's character?
- How does Peggro know what a seizure is?
- Jayben experiences absence seizures. Absence seizures are a type of epileptic seizure. Read the information below to learn more about epilepsy and absence seizures. If you have any further questions about epilepsy, you could ask a school nurse or first aider to help you find out more.

Epilepsy is a common condition that affects the brain and causes frequent seizures.

Seizures are bursts of electrical activity in the brain that temporarily affect how it works. They can cause a wide range of symptoms. Seizures can affect people in different ways, depending on which part of the brain is involved.

An absence seizure is one type of seizure. When somebody has an absence seizure, they lose awareness of their surroundings for a short time. Absence seizures usually only last up to 15 seconds and they can happen several times a day. When a person has had an absence seizure, they won't remember what has happened.

Source: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



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# Theme 2 - Support from Friends

## Activity: Supportive Friends

Can you spot six things Jayben's friends do to support him after he experiences an absence seizure, and six things they say to support him? Write your answers in the grid below.

| <br>Actions | <br>Words |
|--|--|
|  |  |

Discuss the following with a partner:

- How do you think Jayben would feel if his friends weren't there?
- Can you think of three words to describe Phee, Peggro, Maybie and Jayben's friendship?
- If Jayben joined your class, how could you help him to feel safe and supported?



# Theme 3 - The Missing Page

Read the below extract from Chapter 26 of *Jayben and the Golden Torch*.

Jayben looked back again. There was still no sign of Yespa in the dust. 'Yespa has the Torch, and a flashpin. He was taking us to Null.'

Jayben looked at the sky with despair. The sun was winding down. 'And there's no time.'

'We can't give up,' Raynor said.

'If Jayben doesn't have his chord,' Phee asked suddenly, 'then how come he lit the Torch?'

Raynor looked baffled. 'Impossible,' she said. 'You don't control your power. Your memory hasn't returned, has it?'

'No. But I did light it,' insisted Jayben. 'It's how I saved Last Rock. And I lit it before then, too.'

'No Dreamer has ever lit the Torch without finding their chord and, with it, their memory.'

'Well, they had help from the Book,' Jayben said, annoyed to have it pointed out yet again. 'They had maps, instructions, a prophecy. I only have a missing page. It's been hard, but I needed to light it – and I did.'

'That's . . . that's extraordinary!'

'Yeah,' said Phee. 'I know it sucks that you don't remember, Ben, and the Book isn't much help. But in a weird way, maybe that missing page sets you free a bit? It can't define you. You get to write it.'

The words shifted something in his mind. Phee was right. Unlike the other Dreamers, he didn't have to follow everything the Book said.

-Chapter 26



## Discussion Questions

- What has Jayben achieved in the story so far?
- Can you find a word which shows that Raynor is confused?
- In what way is Jayben different to the other Dreamers?
- What information do you think the missing page contains?
- In what way might the missing page set Jayben 'free'?
- How does Jayben feel at the beginning of this extract and how do you think he feels by the end?
- Can you predict what might happen next in the story?



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# Reflection Questions

- What do you like best about the world that Thomas Leeds has created?
- If there were to be a sequel to this novel, what do you think might happen?  
Can you predict what the opening line of the sequel might be?
- If you could ask Thomas Leeds three questions, what would you ask him?



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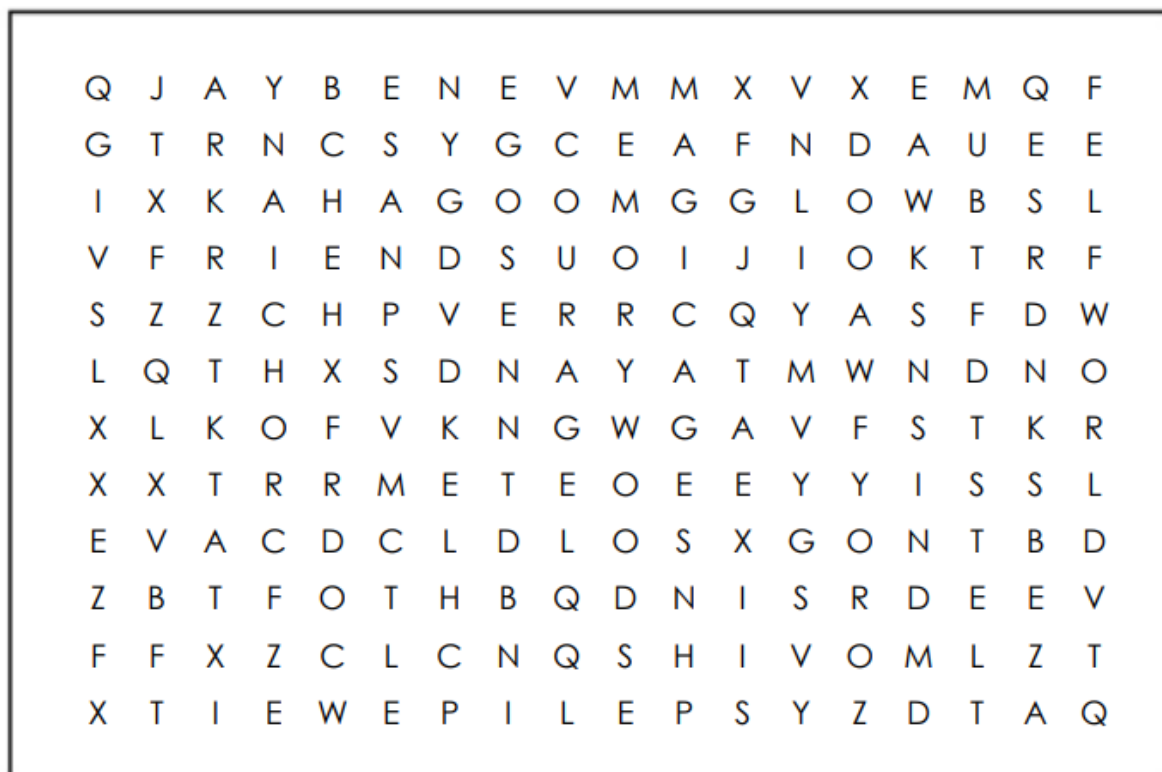
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# Jayben and the Golden Torch Wordsearch

Can you find the words hidden in the below wordsearch? Words can go across, down or diagonal



**JAYBEN  
MEMORY WOODS  
TORCH**

**EPILEPSY  
FRIENDS  
COURAGE**

**ELF WORLD  
MAGIC AGES  
GIANTS**



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