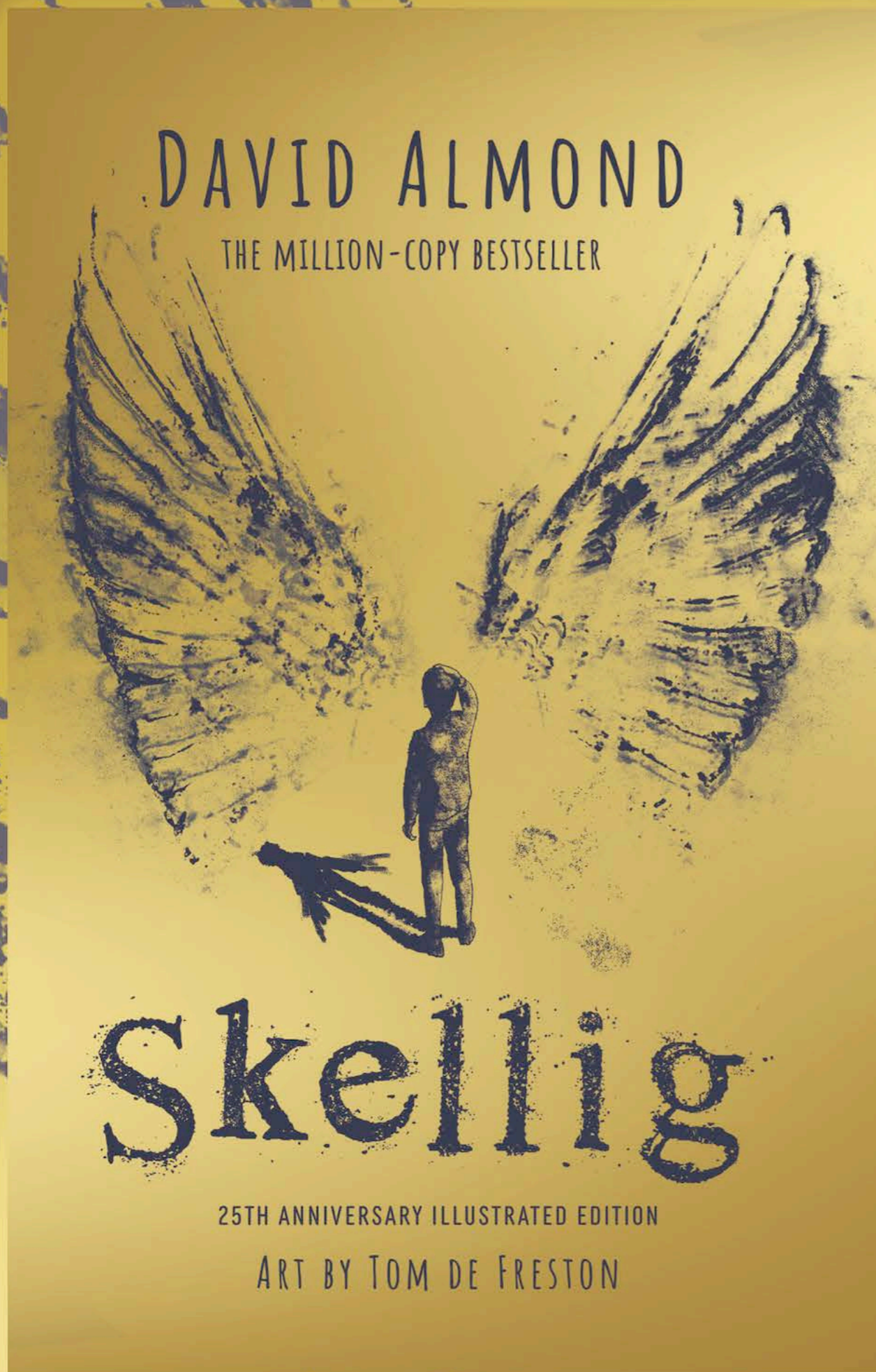


Skellig



SCHEME OF WORK

PERFECT FOR:

Students aged 10+; a magical and mysterious story that explores family, friendship, and what it means to stand out and belong; a perfect springboard into classic poetry; Greek Mythology; exploring the themes of hope and healing; & more!

KEY FOR CROSS-CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES:

English: Reading Comprehension; Creative Writing;

Writing to Entertain and Inform

Drama, Speaking and Listening

Design Technology & Art

Mathematics

Science

Computing

Geography

PSHE and Citizenship

NOTE: This scheme of work can be used for paperback editions (PB) and the hardback illustrated edition (HB).

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WEEK 1 (CHAPTERS 1–7): ENTERING THE WILDERNESS

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Reading: Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Predict what might happen next - Identify how a writer creates tension and suspense - Identify language and devices used for effect <p>Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plot a journey and locate places on maps <p>Drama, Speaking and Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore a character's thoughts, feelings and motivations through a hot-seating activity <p>Creative Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use the word 'Wilderness' as a writing prompt - Write a travel diary inspired by research on the Skellig Islands 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the word 'Skellig' make you think of? Does it remind you of anything? Write a definition to explain what it might mean. What do you predict the story is about? 2. How does the first paragraph of Chapter 1 hook the reader in? Choose three details that make you want to find out more. 3. On page 2, we come across the phrase, 'seeing with your mind's eye'. What do you think this means? 4. 'The garden was another place that was supposed to be wonderful' (PB: page 5, HB: page 7). What can we infer from this statement about the house, and Michael's feelings towards it? 5. Read the description of the garage (PB: pages 6–7, HB: pages 8–10). Can you find evidence of sensory details for all five senses in this passage? How do they help bring the scene to life? 6. Can you spot any similarities between the baby and the creature in the garage (PB: pages 7 and 10, HB: pages 10 and 16)? How does Michael react to both characters? 7. Michael considers telling a stranger on the bus what is going on in his life (PB: page 12, HB: page 20). Why does he have this urge? Can speaking to a stranger about our problems ever be helpful? 8. Can you identify the ways in which the author builds tension? (PB: page 16, HB: pages 25–26). Look at sentence lengths and openers, as well as the way Michael's behaviour is described. 9. Can you spot any figurative language (PB: page 17, HB: page 28)? How does it help us to visualize the creature? Can you come up with your own similes to describe him? 10. What are your first impressions of Mina? (PB: page 19, HB: page 32). Consider how she moves, speaks, and behaves towards Michael. How would you describe her in your own words? What do you predict her relationship with Michael might be like in the future? Compare your ideas with others. 	<p>The Skellig Islands (Skellig Michael and Little Skellig) are two uninhabited islets off the southwestern coast of Ireland. Locate these rocky islets on a map and find out how far they are from where you live. Can you discover where the name of these islands comes from? Write a travel diary, imagining you have visited them; describe the weather, landscape and how it felt to be in an uninhabited place.</p> <p>The idea of 'wilderness' is mentioned a number of times in the first few chapters and is an important theme within the story. Using inspiration from <i>Skellig</i> and your own ideas, compose a piece of creative writing with 'Wilderness' as the title. Remember to include a wide range of sensory detail, similes and metaphors.</p> <p>Explore the thoughts and feelings of the main characters by hot-seating them as a class. Then, write a range of open questions to ask Michael, his parents, the creature, and Mina. Work in small groups, then share and compare as a class.</p>

WEEK 2 (CHAPTERS 8–14): SKELETON WITH WINGS

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Reading: Comprehension - Retrieve information from a text. - Make comparisons within the book.</p> <p>Drama, Speaking and Listening - Create a dramatic scene involving characters from the story.</p> <p>Creative Writing - Retell a Greek Myth, describing setting, characters, and events.</p> <p>Computing - Design an informative presentation, including animations and slide transitions.</p> <p>Science - Recognise that living things have changed over time.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 'It was like a light went on in my head.' (PB: page 20, HB: 33). What does this mean, and what is Michael now realising?2. Michael states that his mum 'tried to make a fuss' of him. Why has he used the word 'tried', and what does this suggest about how he is currently feeling about the family dynamic? (PB: page 21, HB: 34)3. Do you agree with Mina's thoughts about drawing in chapter 9?4. 'He laughed but he didn't smile.' What makes this observation on page 26 so unsettling? What does it suggest about the creature?5. Collect words and phrases the author has used to help create a vivid image of the mysterious character (PB: pages 27 and 29, HB: pages 44 and 46).6. Michael learns about evolution and is shown a poster of how humans evolved from apes. Why do you think he 'looked really closely at the poster'? (PB: page 32, HB: page 52). What might be on his mind?7. When Michael has his conversation with the old man on the bus (PB: pages 33 and 34, HB: page 54). What do you notice about the old man's responses? How do they connect to the themes/ideas we have already begun to explore within the novel?8. Michael's mum is experiencing mixed emotions (PB: page 36, HB: pages 56–57). What are the different thoughts and feelings we can infer from her behaviour?9. Before you read on in Chapter 13, where do you predict Mina wants to take Michael? Once you have read to the end of the chapter, compare the actual outcome with your prediction. What might this place represent for Mina? And for Michael?10. In Chapter 14, Michael and his dad begin to tackle the wilderness and experience a hopeful moment as they imagine the garden being used by the baby. What are the other hopeful moments in this chapter?	<p>In the story, a number of characters from Greek mythology are mentioned e.g. Ulysses and Polyphemus, Icarus and Daedulus, and later on, Persephone. Select one of these characters to research – then design an illustrated storyboard to retell their story in your own words.</p> <p>Following the scene in which we see the tawny owls up close, find out more about the owl world. Create an informative PowerPoint presentation, which tells the reader all about a specific owl type, or owls in general. Try to include interesting transitions, animations, and sound effects.</p> <p>Create a drama scene in which Michael tells his friends, Leakey and Coot, all about what is going on in his life and what is on his mind. How do you imagine they would respond? Try out two different outcomes: one positive, one negative. Consider whether you think they are good friends to Michael, and how they could support him more.</p> <p>Think about how humans have evolved and how we may continue to evolve. Sketch and annotate your ideas of how we may change to adapt to our potential future environments.</p>

WEEK 3 (CHAPTERS 15–21): MYSTERY MAN

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Reading: Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify evidence from the text to support theories and opinions. - Use a Venn diagram to compare characters. - Ask questions about a text. <p>Drama, Speaking and Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perform a poem, using intonation and actions for effect. <p>Design Technology and Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a sketchbook page to record Mina's observations. <p>Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognise the impact of diet, exercise, drugs and lifestyle on our health. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the beginning of Chapter 15, Michael discovers that Mina doesn't attend school. What does his response tell us about his thoughts on this? 2. Mina says that 'truth and dreams are always getting muddled' (PB: page 49, HB: 75). How does this idea relate to the events we have read about so far? Do you have any dreams that leave you feeling a certain way? 3. How does the old lady in the hospital ward (PB: page 63, HB: page 90) compare to the creature, who also suffers with arthritis? What advice do you think she would give to him? 4. Read Chapter 19. Do you think Mina's home is a good school substitute? What evidence can you find to suggest that she still receives a good education? 5. We hear that Ernie may have thought the creature was simply a 'figment' (PB: page 52, HB: page 77). Using the context, what do you think this means? Do you think he is a 'figment'? 6. Michael struggles to make the figure of the baby out of clay (PB: page 69, HB: page 97). Why is this significant, and what can we infer from this? 7. Michael and Mina's friendship seems to be deepening at this point in the story (PB: pages 69–71, HB: pages 97–102). What evidence can you find to support this? Copy out key quotations. 8. 'There were tears in my eyes'. Why do you think Michael gets so upset? (PB: page 72, HB: page 105). Are they tears of sadness, or other emotions, too? 9. How does the author make Mina's meeting with the creature (PB: pages 74–75, HB: 107–109) an especially moving scene? Select three details that help make it a remarkable moment. 10. What does Mina think she has found? (PB: page 76, HB: page 110). What might this suggest about the creature? What questions does it raise? 	<p>Read the poem, <i>'The Schoolboy'</i> by William Blake. Which parts do you recognise from Mina? Discuss some of the key ideas and images that stand out to you. What is your favourite line or stanza, and why? In small groups, take a stanza or two each and practise reciting the poem with suitable actions.</p> <p>Based on what we know about Mina, draw a page of her sketchbook. Try to capture a range of different images and ideas that you think Mina would include.</p> <p>Thinking about the developing friendship of Michael and Mina, create a Venn diagram to reveal their similarities and differences. Consider family background, personality, interests, and anything else you have noticed about both characters.</p> <p>Create a diet/lifestyle plan for the creature that will provide the nutrients he requires and improve his general well-being.</p>

WEEK 4 (CHAPTERS 22–29): MONKEY GIRL

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES

Reading:

Comprehension

- Identify and summarise key details.
- Consider a character's internal monologues.

Creative Writing

- Write and perform a playscript based on an imagined scene.

Drama, Speaking and Listening

- Take part in a whole class debate, presenting your arguments clearly and listening to the responses of your peers.

PSHE and Citizenship

- Consider and discuss ways in which you can manage healthy friendships.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. In your own words, summarise Michael's dream. (PB: page 78, HB: pages 113–116). Can you manage it in 50 words or fewer?
2. Why do Michael and Mina question whether they are dreaming? (PB: page 79, HB: page 116).
3. In this chapter, we learn more about the creature. Create a mini fact-file with new information about him.
4. 'She stopped after the first three sentences and just looked at me' (PB: page 84, HB: page 124). What can we infer from this? How does Michael's education seem to compare to Mina's?
5. We come across the following description of Skellig: 'we saw his tears dropping through the beams of light [...] He knelt by the blankets, panting.' How has Skellig changed since our first sighting of him? (PB: page 88, HB: page 130)
6. Why do you think Michael needs to make sure 'the world's still really there' (PB: page 90, HB: page 136)?
7. In Chapters 27 and 28, why do you think Coot (and to some extent Leakey) struggles so much to understand Michael and Mina's new friendship? How does it differ to their friendship with him?
8. Michael's dad writes 'Danger' onto the boards of the dilapidated shed. Where does this remind us of? (PB: page 98, HB: page 146). Compare both Mina's grandad's house and the shed – what does each place have in common?
9. Michael says the following to Mina: 'You might know about William Blake but you know nothing about what ordinary people do.' (PB: page 102, HB: page 151). To what extent do you agree with Michael?
10. The last scene in Chapter 29 shows Michael crying in the wilderness. In thought-bubbles, write down what he might be thinking and feeling based on the events so far.

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

Imagine that Mina tries out Michael's school for the day. What do you think she would struggle with most? Are there any aspects that you think she might actually enjoy? **Write this scene as a playscript** and perform it with some friends. Remember to include the key features and layout of a playscript.

Lots of people experience friendship issues at some point in their school life. Thinking carefully about Michael's situation, as well as any other issues that may affect friendships, **can you come up with some 'top tips' to help children make and keep friends?** Discuss your thoughts in PSHE and display these ideas as posters in your classroom.

Come up with a **list of pros and cons for home-schooling**. Using the points you have raised to help organise your ideas, take part in a whole class debate.

WEEK 5 (CHAPTERS 30–36): ANYTHING SEEMS POSSIBLE AT NIGHT

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Reading: Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use clues from the text to infer what a character is thinking and feeling. - Discuss and evaluate how the author has used language effectively. - Analyse the use of contrast. <p>Design Technology and Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a piece of artwork inspired by a scene from the book. - Explore the techniques and style of Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' paintings, and use these to create your own artwork. <p>Creative Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respond to a piece of poetry by writing your own extended metaphor poem. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What descriptive techniques does David Almond use to depict the night-time scene in the first paragraph of Chapter 30? Which is your favourite description? 2. Do you agree with the idea that it 'is possible to hate your friend'? (PB: page 106, HB: page 157). Can you ever imagine feeling like this? 3. How do we know Michael and Mina are panicking? (PB: page 107, HB: page 159). 4. The use of sound greatly enhances the impact of the scene in Chapter 31 (PB: page 108, HB: page 160). Can you sort the sounds into different categories? 5. 'He seemed stronger than he had ever been' (PB: page 109, HB: page 167). What has helped Skellig to grow in strength and flourish? 6. What do the words 'wings would never rise at his back' (PB: page 114, HB: page 173) suggest about Michael's view of Dr Death? Do you think this doctor deserves his nickname? Consider other nicknames in the book – who has/doesn't have one, and what do the nicknames reveal? 7. At the end of Chapter 32, Michael's dad 'was trying to be all brisk and efficient but he pressed his lips together and [...] I saw the scared look in his eyes.' Thinking about the chapter we have just read, what can we infer from this observation? 8. 'You're very brave, Michael' (PB: page 121, HB: page 180). How has Michael demonstrated bravery so far? Why does he think he doesn't deserve to be called brave? Who else do you think has been brave in the story? 9. How has David Almond used the words of William Blake (from the poem, 'The Angel') to enhance the conversation between Mina and Michael? (PB: pages 123–124, HB: pages 182–183). What do you think is being foreshadowed? 10. What does 'oblivious' mean (PB: page 132, HB: page 191)? Would an 'oblivious heart' be a good thing? 	<p>See if you can follow David Almond's description of the night-time to create your own piece of artwork. As a further challenge, research Vincent van Gogh and his 'Starry Night' oil paintings. You could even try to recreate one of his famous night-time scenes.</p> <p>How has David Almond used contrast to create a vivid scene on pages 109 and 110? Create two columns (label them dark and light). Pull out any examples that you can find from the text and add them to your grid. You could finish off by writing a paragraph to sum up your findings.</p> <p>One of the key themes in the story is the importance of hope. Read Emily Dickinson's poem, 'Hope is the Thing with Feathers' and think about why she has chosen to represent hope as a bird. Think about another extended metaphor you could use to describe hope. Can you write your own version of the poem?</p>

WEEK 6 (CHAPTERS 37–46): A PIECE OF PARADISE

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Reading: Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retrieve and record information about a character and setting. - Discuss the main themes and symbols within the novel. - Identify how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases. <p>Creative Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write an epilogue to the story, making links back to themes, events and characters <p>Mathematics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construct a pie chart based on the characteristics of Skellig. - Interpret and use data using bar charts and line graphs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 37 begins with a series of short sentences. What is the effect of these and how do they help to convey Michael's emotions at this point? What parallels can you draw between the bird family and Michael's family? (PB: page 135, HB: page 196). Michael imagines Persephone's struggle (PB: page 138, HB: page 199). Pick out some of the emotive language that is used to describe her journey. Why do you think this story is particularly meaningful to Michael right now? Find the similes that describe Michael (PB: page 143, HB: page 206). Who do they remind you of? Chapter 40 ends with a cliffhanger. How could the words 'it's over, son' be interpreted? Try saying this line in different ways, to produce different effects. Michael urges Mina to listen to his sister's heart (PB: page 155, HB: page 222). What does this reveal about how he has changed since the beginning of the story? Consider Mina's influence on him. 'Something like you, something like a beast, something like a bird, something like an angel' (PB: page 158, HB: page 227). Which of these do you feel best describes Skellig? Look back through the book for evidence to support your decision and share with the class. Leakey says that he feels Michael has 'been miles and miles away' (PB: page 160, HB: page 233). Is this an accurate assessment of the situation? Why does the statement 'a little paradise for us all' (PB: page 166, HB: page 240) represent such a big moment in the story? Think back to how the garden has been described up until now. To what extent do you think the final chapter ties up the various loose ends? Consider Skellig, the baby, Michael and Mina, and the family as a whole. What questions remain in your mind? 	<p>David Almond draws on a number of symbols within the story – from black cats, birds and skeletons, to dreams, darkness and angels. In small groups, research what one of the symbols represent and present your findings to the class.</p> <p>Based on his own description of what he is, as well as your own thoughts, construct a pie chart to represent the different sides to Skellig. What do you think deserves the biggest slice of pie? Explain your thoughts.</p> <p>Share chapters out between the class and create a tally of bird references per chapter. Use your records to create a bar chart or line graph. Which chapter contains the most bird references?</p> <p>Now you have finished '<i>Skellig</i>', imagine there is an epilogue, revealing what life is like at a certain point <i>after</i> the ending. Write or story-board the epilogue, making clear how long after the ending this takes place. Does Skellig ever return? Is Joy fully recovered? What is Michael and Mina's friendship like now?</p>