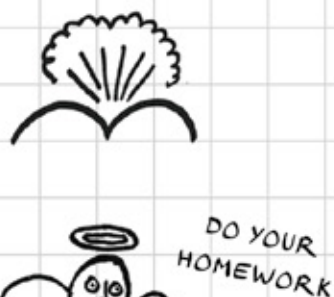


# LOKi: A BAD GOD'S GUIDE TO BEING GOOD

<sup>GOD OF ASGARD!</sup>  
**LOUIE STOWELL**

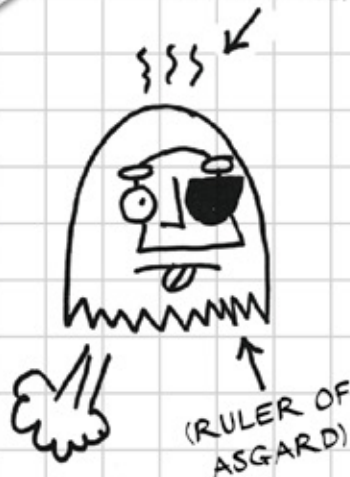
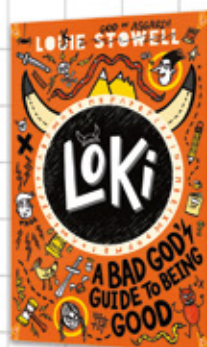
## TEACHERS' NOTES



Stinky Odin  
AKA  
The Allfarter



WALKER  
BOOKS



[www.lokibooks.com](http://www.lokibooks.com)

*These notes have been written by the teachers at the CLPE to provide schools with ideas to develop comprehension and cross-curricular activities around this text. They build on our work supporting teachers to use quality texts throughout the reading curriculum. They encourage a deep reading of and reflection on the text, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, rather than in just one sitting. We hope you find them useful.*

*Packed with doodles and cartoons, this is the wry, witty and very funny diary of Norse god Loki and the trials of being trapped on Earth as a weedy eleven-year-old boy. After one prank too many, trickster god Loki is banished to live as a “normal” school boy. If he can show moral improvement within one month, then Loki can return to Asgard... and if he can't? Then it's eternity in a pit of angry snakes. To keep track of his progress, Odin has handed over this magical diary in which Loki is forced to confess the truth. Anyone reading Loki's diary is about to learn that this is one god who hasn't a clue how to tell good from bad, trust from tricks, or friends from enemies...*

These notes have been written with children in Key Stage 2 in mind, but you will need to adapt them as appropriate to the age and experience of your children.

## Before You Start:

- As you read through the book, it would be helpful to use a group Reading Journal or give children individual Reading Journals to record discussions and responses to the text. The children should also be asked to consider the author's use of language and how she creates a particular effect, response or image at key points throughout the text. The author's vocabulary also provides opportunities for word investigations.
- The length of the book means that you will need to consider how you wish children to engage with the text. You could use a blend of reading aloud by the adult; re-reading by the adult or the children and discussion of key passages; pupils reading sections of the text independently between sessions, depending on their experience, then summarising what they have read; revisiting specific passages and engaging in specific activities to deepen response and comprehension.
- To support children's overview of the story, you might provide children with opportunities to regularly summarise and revisit the main events of the book. As the narrative is framed around a 31-day trial for the main character, you could give children a simple calendar overview on which they can jot down their summary of the main events each day, particularly the ones that impact Loki's progress – or lack of – as the calendar counts down towards Odin's judgement.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



**Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good Teachers' Notes © The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education**

Text and Illustrations © 2022 Louie Stowell. You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.



## Cover and Days 1–4 (pages 15–66)

- Begin by sharing the cover, considering some of the messages or clues that it might contain about the book they are about to read. Ask the children to make predictions of what the story could be about and to justify their responses, drawing out any connections they may make to other stories. Record the children's responses around a photocopy of the cover and return to these as you read the book, comparing the children's initial thoughts with how the story actually unfolds.
- Children might start with the title. Have they heard of Loki before? Children might be familiar with the name and know that it refers to a character, either through familiarity with Norse and Viking culture and mythology or in relation to popular culture, such as the the comics and film character. If the children are aware that Loki is a Norse god, then they might begin to make connections with some of the other illustrations on the cover, such as the stereotypical Viking horned helmet, the drawings of Thor and his hammer, the runic symbols around the title and the reference to Asgard. They might note the "me" speech bubble and conclude that this must be an illustration of Loki. *Why write "me" and not "Loki"? What does that suggest about the narrator of this story?*
- Discuss more broadly the range of illustrations and the style of drawing used. *What do the style of the drawings suggest? What might the individual sketches and doodles suggest about the setting, characters and events of the book as well as the tone or genre of the story?* Children might discuss the deliberate decision to use a relatively simple informal drawing style. Discuss any connections that they make with other books they may have read or seen which feature this style of illustration (such as those by Jeff Kinney, Liz Pichon, Rachel Renée Russell, Emer Stamp, etc.). *What do those books have in common? How does that inform your expectations for this story?*
- Revisit the full title and consider what that might mean. *Why might Loki be described as a bad god? What does that suggest?* Allow children to draw on any wider subject knowledge where relevant to draw out expected characteristics and behaviours. *Why might this guide have been written? What does the idea of a guide suggest?*
- Draw together their overall thoughts so far. *What aspects of the cover intrigue you or interest you the most? Does the cover make you want to read the story? Why? Why not?*
- The children may have heard of the author Louie Stowell, or read other stories by her. *If so, what does your knowledge or experience of her other books lead you to expect here?*
- Open the book and explore the first few spreads together, responding to any further illustrations on the title and dedication pages and then pausing on the diagrams of the "Map of the Worlds", the cast of characters, and the timetable. *Why might Louie Stowell have chosen to include these before starting the story? What do you like about them? What do we learn from these spreads and how might they affect our expectations for the story to come?*
- As you discuss these spreads, explore what children already know about Norse mythology and the Viking era more broadly. Support them in generating personal lists of key words and their meanings that will support and enhance their comprehension and enjoyment as they read the text, such as Heimdall, Midgard, Asgard, the Rainbow Bridge, etc. If possible, provide access to a rich range of texts – non-fiction and collections of mythological tales, as well as titles linked to more recent depictions – to allow children to read more widely and deepen their understanding of references made during the story.



**Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good Teachers' Notes © The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education**

Text and Illustrations © 2022 Louie Stowell. You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.

- On the character page, ask the children for two or three characteristics or adjectives to describe the characters depicted. What aspects of the drawing – facial expressions, body language, costuming, etc. (or their knowledge of the mythological figures) – have supported that inference?
- Before reading Day 1, share the illustration that heads each chapter: the Loki Virtue Score. *What might that mean? What is “virtue”? Have you heard that term before?* Children might have heard of common sayings such as “patience is a virtue”, or might make connections with other terms such as “virtuous”. After establishing a clear meaning for the term, consider what that score might mean for Loki’s character, and why that score might be being shared in this way. *Can you think of anyone that you would describe as virtuous? What behaviours or attitudes might be considered a “virtue”?* Children might suggest kindness, generosity, friendliness, compassion, helpfulness, etc. *What might someone need to do to raise their “virtue score”?*
- Read aloud the opening chapter (Day 1, pages 15-30). Afterwards, give the children time and space to reflect on and discuss what they have heard, and to consider what they think is happening in this chapter; who the main characters are and what we learn about them, and the extent to which this meets or subverts their expectations for the book. Establish children’s understanding of the main events and information communicated in this chapter (*How has Loki ended up in this situation? What does he have to do? What happens if he doesn’t?*) and then allow them to share their inferences and predictions for what that might mean: *What might make this task especially difficult for him? How do you think he feels about having to live like this? How do you know? Do you think Odin has selected a suitable and fair punishment? Why/why not?*
- As you discuss this chapter (and throughout the reading of the rest of the text) support children in reading and drawing out key vocabulary that they may not be familiar with or may not fully understand in the context. These might be words specifically related to Viking culture and mythology (such as: *mortal, Heimdall, Hyrrokkin, Thor, trickster, Odin, Sif, divine powers, Asgardian, Rainbow Bridge, Midgard, animal pelts, Allfather*). However, it may also include examples of literary language and phrases that won’t commonly be used in children’s daily spoken vocabulary, such as “*clapped in chains*”; “*glorious nature*”; “*disembodied voice*”; “*Society of the Tedious and Humdrum*”, *hovel, apocalyptically*, etc.
- Note these down and then support children’s understanding using artefacts, photographs and video sources, as well as written definitions and examples, to bring these words to life and support the pupils in using them in context. It would also be useful to consider what the use of vocabulary like this suggests about our narrator.
- Following this, pupils can begin to take ownership for picking out and discussing words and possible meanings, finding ways to confirm meanings throughout the unit and enriching and enlarging their repertoire of historical vocabulary. They may keep their own individual word book, or note vocabulary in their Reading Journal. Alternatively, you may want to work together to create a shared glossary of the terms related to Viking culture that appear in the text as you read the book.
- Finish the session by drawing together their understanding of the main character at this stage. You might support the children recording their observations by completing a Role on the Wall poster for Loki. To do this, have a prepared outline (perhaps based on Louie Stowell’s illustrations) onto which the children can record their ideas. Ask the children to write words or phrases on the outside of the outline that summarise what they know about his external characteristics – his appearance (and how that has changed!) as well as his actions, behaviours and speech. On the inside of the outline, children can note internal characteristics that might be described or can be inferred by the text and illustrations: Loki’s thoughts, feelings and personality. Support the children in making explicit links between the external and internal. *For example,*



### Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good Teachers' Notes © The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education

Text and Illustrations © 2022 Louie Stowell. You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.

*what does something Loki does — cutting off Sif's hair, answering back, refusing to keep the diary — tell us about his personality? Or, how does Loki's personality — clever, selfish, mocking, feeble — make a specific action or event seem most likely?*

- As the children read more of the book, encourage them to return to the Role on the Wall to record further insights and observations. These notes might be used to support children in writing a pen portrait or character description later in the book.
- Before the next session, either read aloud, or ask children to read independently, Days 2, 3 and 4 (pages 31-66).

### Days 5–7 (pages 67-87)

- Begin the session by asking the children to summarise what they have read in Days 2–4, and then discuss their responses to the text so far. The group can begin to explore their responses to it with the help of what Aidan Chambers calls “the four basic questions”, giving children accessible starting points for discussion:
  - *Was there anything you liked about this text?*
  - *Was there anything that you particularly disliked?*
  - *Was there anything that puzzled you?*
  - *Were there any patterns ... any connections that you noticed?*
- As you read on, the children will benefit from regular opportunities to return to these questions, sharing their personal responses to the key events and character developments as they occur.
- Children may discuss any further insights into the depiction of Loki as the main character and narrator of the story: *What more do we know about Loki? What elements of the character do you think are drawn from the original mythology? How do you think being a “human child” might have changed him? What more would you like to find out about him?* You might make age-appropriate retellings of Norse mythology available for children who are curious about his previous adventures that are regularly hinted at in the text. Children might recreate and add to the family tree that is drawn on pages 40-41. Discuss whether they feel that Loki has been fairly or unfairly treated by the other gods. What have they read that has led them to feel that way?
- *How does the author demonstrate that Loki does not quite fit in the human world, or understand it?* Children might refer to the way in which he interacts with humans or comments on the regular everyday elements of humans' lives. *Did they like those sections? Why/why not?* They might refer back to Loki's description of the school, or the label he writes on the drawing of the refrigerator on p32 that labels it a “cold prison for human food”. *What other elements of day-to-day life do you think Loki wouldn't understand? How might he describe them? How might you explain them to him?*
- Discuss some of the similarities and differences between the depiction of Loki and Thor. *Do they like Thor? Why/why not? Which character do they prefer? What do you think the author has done to make you feel that way?* Children might benefit from creating a Role on the Wall for Thor and comparing it to their early impressions of Loki.
- Capture their early impressions of Valerie. *What do we know about her? What do we want to find out? Do we know why she might have been “staring daggers” in Chapter 2? Do you think she will be able to help Loki? Or will she be an adversary? What makes you think so?* If children are familiar with Norse mythology and beliefs,



**Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good Teachers' Notes © The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education**

Text and Illustrations © 2022 Louie Stowell. You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.

they may note the similarity between the name Valerie and Valkyrie. *Why might that name have been selected? Who were the Valkyrie? What might this suggest about that character's role in the story?*

- Next, read Days 5, 6 and 7 (pages 67-87), afterwards allowing the children to share their responses and insights into those new events and characterisations.
- Return together to p82 and re-read the definition of the internet according to the immortal Viking realm. *What does it suggest their view of the internet is? How do they feel about it? Do you think they approve of the internet or think it's useful? Do you agree with their definition? Why/why not?* You might compare this with the definitions that have already appeared relating to cars (p63), private schools (p46) and jobs (p45).
- Ask the children to consider and list some other aspects of modern life that Loki and the other gods may struggle to understand. *How might those lifestyle choices, behaviours or technology appear from their immortal point of view? How do you think they might define them?* Outside of this session, children could work with a partner to draft an additional entry for the "At A Glance Guide to Mortal Life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."
- Revisit the advice Loki receives about "being good". *What is suggested by Loki spending Day 7 trying to understand how to be good? Is he changing as a character? What do you think of the advice Loki receives? Which is the best piece of advice?*
- Discuss what advice they might give – or how they might adapt, clarify or extend the advice listed in the book in order to help Loki be good. *Why is Loki finding it so difficult to be good? Do you think he is really trying? What makes you think that? Do you think it's in Loki's nature to be bad?* You might refer back to the Role on the Wall and the title of the book. *What makes him a "bad god"?*
- As the children reach the end of Loki's first week, consider whether they think Loki has made any progress. *Will his "LVS" have improved? How might the story develop from here?*

### Days 8–13 (pages 88-111)

- Read Days 8–11 (pages 88-104). After reading, allow children time to discuss what they have read, and to share their responses and observations, including any vocabulary that they wish to explore and define.
- Consider what more we learn about Loki's character through his behaviour as well as his writing. *What strategies does he use to try to get a smartphone? Why do you think he really wants one? Were his attempts to get it persuasive? Why do you think Heimdall and Hyrrokkin gave him his phone eventually? How does Loki use the phone? What do you think of his opinions and ideas about the way in which humans use phones? Are they accurate? Why/why not?* This discussion might lead to a wider conversation about appropriate and safe use of mobile phones, apps and how to recognise and appropriately deal with cyber-bullying or trolling behaviour online.
- Children can also consider the choices he makes that keep losing him more virtue points and how he might reverse this trend, as well as re-reading and discussing his views on shopping during Day 11. Add any new observations to the Role on the Wall poster. For example, children might consider how in keeping with Loki's character it is to ignore the advice he is given but then regret it afterwards (p104).
- Revisit sections of the text in which we can see clear examples of Louie Stowell shaping language to capture Loki's different voices. For example, the first paragraph of Day 9 (p94). Ask children to read it aloud



**Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good Teachers' Notes © The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education**

Text and Illustrations © 2022 Louie Stowell. You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.



to themselves and then to share what they notice about the language choices. *How has the vocabulary been chosen and the sentence structure crafted to take on different tones and levels of formality? How does the long opening sentence, crafted in a deliberately theatrical, complex and aloof manner contrast with the short, to-the-point reply? And how do these compare with the way in which Loki speaks when there are examples – within the text and in the speech bubbles – of his spoken dialogue?* Discuss together the choices that the author, Louie Stowell, has made in shaping Loki's written voice. *Did she have to write it like that? What other options did she have?* Work together to draft a version of the opening question that is more colloquial or informal, e.g. "Why did today feel so long?" Or perhaps it didn't need to be a question at all: "Today felt so long: but that's school for you!" Ask children what they like about these choices and different language structures, as well as thinking about what the impact would be on them as readers if the whole text had been written in that exaggerated or deliberately affected style. *Why might the author have chosen to limit the number of times she used that voice? Do you think the changes in tone suit the context and the character? Why/why not?*

- Before reading the next couple of days in the diary, ask the children to summarise how they feel about Valerie at this point. *What more do you know about her? What behaviours have you noticed? What do you think she wants? Is she up to something? What role do you think she might play in the story as it continues to unfold?*
- Then, read Days 12 and 13 (p105-111) and discuss the extent to which it confirmed or countered the group's expectations, as well as any further observations they might have made beyond that. *What did you think about Loki's test to see whether Valerie is a Frost Giant? What does that imply about Loki's character? Do you think that means she is no longer under suspicion?*
- Revisit the interaction between Thor and Loki on pages 109-110. Loki wonders whether one day they "might become friends". Discuss the relationship between them. *Do you think it's likely or possible that they might become friends? How do you think Loki felt when Thor said something nice to him? Why didn't he say something nice back? What do you think he could have said instead?* If children have created a Role on the Wall for Thor, at this stage they might revisit those, draw out any similarities and differences between the two gods and add any further observations or insights. *What does it suggest that only the cat "appreciates" Loki?*
- Before the next session, read Days 14 and 15 (pages 112-120).

### Days 14–17 (pages 110-147)

- Start the session by reviewing the events of Days 14 and 15 and any observations the children might have made during their reading. Children might draw attention to the opening of Chapter 14 as a further example of the overly formal, arch language choices: "But what need have I of Thor?" Discuss how that tone has been achieved by playing with the order of the words, particularly the placement of the verb in relation to the subject. *How would it feel different if the author had written: "Why would I need Thor?"*
- Revisit the moment when the Frost Giant sheds her disguise and offers Loki the deal (p120). Children might respond to aspects of the language that help them to visualise the Frost Giant's appearance. How does the text add to the visual representation in the drawings? *How do we feel when the Frost Giant appears? Is there a sense of threat? Why might that be?* As well as the language in this section, children might recall moments of foreshadowing earlier in the book, with Thor's constant paranoia and worry over the potential appearance of Frost Giants suggesting their menace and danger.



**Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good Teachers' Notes © The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education**

Text and Illustrations © 2022 Louie Stowell. You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.

- Look at the moment when Loki accepts the deal: “I gulped. But I didn’t hesitate for long.” *How do you think Loki feels in this moment? Why do you think he has accepted so quickly? What do we think might happen? What might the consequences of this deal be for Thor and Loki?*
- Note down the children’s predictions, and then go on to read Days 16 and 17, pausing at the end of Day 16 to consider what Loki’s response to Valerie’s clear distress might mean for his character. *Is he changing? Does he have some empathy?*
- Day 17 is an event-filled, longer chapter, so allow the children time to look back through the pages and to summarise the main events, and then to share their responses. *What did you like or dislike about the chapter? What was your favourite moment? Were there moments when your feelings changed or altered? Were there any words or phrases that you particularly liked? Why? Did you have any new insights into any of the characters?*
- Return to the children’s earlier observations about the relationship and comparison between the characters of Thor and Loki. *How do you think Loki manages to trick Thor? Was Thor difficult to influence? Why do you think that might be? Is he trusting while Loki is suspicious?* Look for other contrasts between the characters and examples of their behaviour which exemplifies these characteristics. The group might discuss how those characteristics can sometimes be considered a weakness, for example: Thor is so sure of his strength that he falls into the trap, while Loki is so pleased with himself for tricking Thor that he doesn’t realise he might be being tricked as well.
- Invite children to respond to the way in which Louie Stowell draws upon multiple devices to tell her story. Within this chapter, as well as the core text, she includes comic strip, speech bubbles, thought bubbles, doodles that comment on the action (e.g. the alligator saying “I’m imaginary”), plans and diagrams, sound effects, changes in font, illustrations that are metaphors (the text calls Loki’s “web of lies” a “comfort zone”, which the illustration takes literally). *What do you like about this form of storytelling? How do these elements add to the text? What do you find particularly effective or engaging? Why do you think that might be?* Children might also make connections with other texts that use a similar combination to strengthen storytelling and appeal.
- Finish by summarising what the events in this chapter might mean for Loki’s story as it continues to unfold. *How will it affect his “virtue score”? What does it mean for his relationship with Thor? What impact might this lie have on his “friendship” (as he refers to it) with Valerie? What are the biggest threats to Loki at this stage?*
- Before the next session, read Days 18, 19 and 20 (pages 150-159).

## Day 18–24 (pages 150-179)

- As usual, begin by giving children the opportunity to revisit, summarise and respond to what they have read in Days 18-20. Children might particularly note the signs that Loki might be more open to the idea of being good. *What suggests that he might be able to change and therefore meet Odin’s challenge? In what regard is he still struggling?* Although he has exhibited some positive characteristics (standing up for Valerie and his tentative response to her praise of his behaviour and suggestions of friendship), children might raise further examples of his online behaviour (building on earlier responses to his cyber-bullying through the smartphone).
- In addition to this session, the children might like to research the art of “flyting” to find out more about how Viking poets and warriors engaged in this type of competition of words. After finding out a little more about Viking insults, they could write a short, scripted scene or comic strip depicting a flyting competition between Thor and Loki.



**Loki: A Bad God’s Guide to Being Good Teachers’ Notes © The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education**

Text and Illustrations © 2022 Louie Stowell. You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.



- Go on to read Days 21 and 22 (pages 160-174).
- Ask the children to discuss their response to Loki's plan: to give lots of money to charity in the hope that this benevolent act of philanthropy will make up for all of his previous wrongdoing. *Where do you think he got this idea? Do you think that – in principle – it is a good idea? Why/why not? Do you think that it's a practical idea? Is it possible for him to do this? What is the main obstacle that he needs to overcome? Children will also want to discuss the deal that he has made to get the money. Do they think that the positives of giving the money away would outweigh the negative behaviour required to get the money?*
- Discuss the speech bubbles in this chapter that come from what Loki describes as the "incredibly annoying voice" in his head. *What is this voice? Where is it coming from?* Children might make connections back to the entry for Day 19 (p153) when Loki first began to hear a "faint sound inside [his] mind". Remind them of Loki's internet search on p83, which advised him to listen to his conscience. *How would you define the word "conscience"? How would you describe it to someone else? What is Loki's conscience advising him to do? Why might it be starting to speak up now, when he previously said that he didn't have a conscience?* Children might feel comfortable sharing their own stories of when they should have (or did) listen to their own conscience to stop them from doing something they shouldn't have.
- Ask the children to think about whether it is likely that Loki will ever listen to his conscience. *Why/why not? What do you think it should be saying? If you could be the voice of Loki's conscience, what would you say to convince him to be good?* Give children time to discuss their ideas in pairs or small groups and jot down some thoughts, before asking them to share with the wider group.
- Finally, read and ask the children to summarise the short entries for Days 23 and 24. *What evidence can you find that Loki is changing? What suggests that he remains the same selfish and self-obsessed god that he started as?* Children might draw out phrases such as his "greatest good" being "the greatest good there is" (p176). *What is the effect on you of finishing that chapter on a question rather than a statement?* Ask the children to sum up what Loki's plan is. *How is he going to embarrass Valerie? Why might this be a bad idea? Do you think he is capable of tricking her into singing? Would somebody be able to trick you into doing something you didn't want to?*
- Before the next session, ask the children to jot down their predictions for how they think the book might end. Loki only has one more week. *Do you think he will be able to meet Odin's demands? If not, what might stop him? If he does, how? What will Odin's response be either way?*

## Days 25–31 (pages 180-236)

- Start the session by returning to the predictions that were made at the end of the previous session. *How do you think the book is going to end? Will Loki manage to avoid his punishment? What makes you think that?* Invite children to share their thoughts about the character. *Do you want Loki to succeed? Do you want him to get away with it? Do you like him as a character? What makes you like or not like him? What would be a satisfying ending for you as a reader?*
- Read Days 25-29, allowing for children to respond to new information and share their opinions. After reading Day 28, pause briefly to allow the children to discuss their predictions for what might happen on Day 29: *What evidence do we find that Loki is actually very good at tricking people? Do you think he'll go through with his plan? Do you think he might succeed after all? What evidence suggests that he might back out of his deal?*



**Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good Teachers' Notes © The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education**

Text and Illustrations © 2022 Louie Stowell. You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.

- After reading Day 29, allow the children time to discuss what they have heard. Does it change their earlier opinions about the character? What might this mean for the end of the story? Invite children to look back through the text and illustrations from Day 29 and note the shifting emotions of Valerie and Loki as the events unfold. *How do you think Valerie is feeling before, during and after the talent show? Do you think she suspects that Loki is lying? When does she realise for certain?* Ask the children to look for examples in the text of the different ways in which Louie Stowell depicts the characters' thoughts and feelings. Children might draw out phrases like Loki feeling "oddly empty" or "feeling like all the air was gone from my lungs"; they might mention the illustration of his elongated nose (p202) or the image of him shrunk down smaller than the bag of money (p203).
- At the end of the chapter, Loki realises that he has made a terrible mistake and Thor tells him that there is no more hope for him. *What might this mean for the end of the story? Can Loki make up for the choices he has made?*
- Read aloud the final two chapters and then ask children to share their responses to the way the book ends. *Did you like the way the book finished? Did any aspect of the ending surprise you? Is it a satisfying end for the characters? Why do you think Loki chooses to try and rescue Valerie?*
- Draw together their overall thoughts on the book: *What did you like about the text? Was there anything that you particularly disliked? Was there anything that puzzled you? Did it remind you of anything else you've read or seen?* Discuss how the book compared with their original expectations and whether they think they would enjoy other books like this one.
- Invite the group to share their final thoughts about the main character. *Would you describe Loki as the hero of this story? Why/why not? What characteristics would we expect a story's hero to have?* Draw out some examples of familiar literary heroes based on the children's recent reading to compare with Loki. Discuss some of the ways in which we might distinguish between a book's hero and its protagonist. Introduce children to the term anti-hero. An anti-hero is usually the main character in a story, but they spend most of the story doing bad things, rather than good, and although they might learn some lessons, they still remain largely "bad" by the end of the story. *Is Loki an anti-hero? Do you think there's a limit to how selfish the protagonist can be before we don't want to spend time with them? How did this story tread the line between hero and villain? Did you sympathise or empathise with Loki to a different extent at different parts of the story?* Invite children to make connections with other anti-heroes in children's literature, or across popular culture. Children might be aware of characters like Artemis Fowl (from Eoin Colfer's series) or Francesca Simon's Horrid Henry. They might also make connections with characters in comic books such as Dennis the Menace and Minnie the Minx from *The Beano*, or Evil Emperor Penguin from *The Phoenix*.
- Ask the children to describe their favourite part of the story. Provide the children with an oral scaffold, for example: *the most memorable part of the story was... because...; my top moment in the story was... because...* and in pairs ask them to identify their favourite part of the narrative. Encourage children to give reasons for their choices and invite some children to share these.
- If children enjoyed the book, they might be invited to think about who they would recommend it to, and to write short reviews, summarising the basic plot without giving away any key details that would spoil surprises for a would-be reader. They could share what they liked about the book and what they might compare it to, e.g. *"If you enjoyed \_\_\_\_\_, then you might like to try \_\_\_\_\_"*. Discuss with the children where best to share their reviews. They might be added to the class or school webpage, added to a class newsletter, or displayed in the book corner or school library.



### **Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good Teachers' Notes © The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education**

Text and Illustrations © 2022 Louie Stowell. You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.

- Leave multiple copies of the book in the book corner for the children to revisit and re-read in independent reading time, by themselves or socially in a group.

## After Reading:

- After reading the novel, children might engage in a comparative literature study, investigating and comparing different depictions of Loki. Children could be provided with copies of different texts featuring the Norse god, Loki, as a character and draw out the different elements of his character. *How is he depicted? What are his physical attributes? How does he speak? What does he say? What is suggested by his actions? What is his relationship with Thor, and the other gods? Would you describe his depiction as hero, anti-hero, villain or something else?* Children could compare Louie Stowell's version of Loki with his appearances in retellings of the original myths, in other contemporary stories, and within the popular comics (see suggested texts below). Carefully selected short scenes from the Cinematic Universe could also be used to draw out similarities and differences.
- Review the story in chronological order and consider the different emotions that Loki has felt throughout the story, the high and low points, using the Role on the Wall to support discussion of his emotional journey. You could use **hot-seating** to explore the feelings of any of the characters further; in hot-seating, one member of the group role-plays a central character from the story and is interviewed by the other children. This activity involves children closely examining a character's motivation and responses. The children could work collaboratively to choose words that describe a character's emotions at different points of the story. Write these on post-it notes and then organise them to demonstrate shades of emotional intensity that they have felt in the story, creating a **graph of emotion**.
- Louie Stowell's novel ends with Loki and his family choosing to remain on Earth, and the assurance that this adventure is set to be continued. *What would you like to see from a future Loki story? Are there characters from this story that you would like to see returning? Will the Frost Giants try to take their revenge on Thor and Loki? What other threats might there be? How might some of Loki's more negative character traits cause him problems or create obstacles to his life on Earth?* After discussing and jotting down ideas for future stories, children might be given time to start drafting their own Loki sequel. Like this story, their finished ideas could be presented as a mixture of text and illustration, with some sequences published in comic strip form.
- In imagining and creating descriptions of modern devices and practices as seen from a Viking (and immortal!) point of view, children could be provided with an opportunity to explore kennings and other metaphors and imagery associated with Viking naming, poetry and storytelling, such as the heiti. Children can try to create their own hyphenated compound descriptors for other modern-day objects such as laptops or motorised scooters. Look at some examples of kennings here:  
<https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poetic-devices/kennings>
- Provide further opportunities for children to access different retellings of Vikings myths and legends during time set aside for independent reading.

## Links to support the widening knowledge of Viking myths and culture:

- [CLPE's Norse Myths Booklist](#)
- [Teacher Guide to the Vikings](#)
- [BBC Bitesize: Vikings](#)



**Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good Teachers' Notes © The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education**

Text and Illustrations © 2022 Louie Stowell. You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.



- [BBC Class Clips](#)
- [Jorvik Viking Centre, York](#)
- [Storynory Norse Myths](#)

### Selected texts by Louie Stowell:

- *Otherland* by Louie Stowell (Nosy Crow)
- *The Dragon in the Library* by Louie Stowell, illustrated by Davide Ortu (Nosy Crow)
- *Doctor Who: The Team TARDIS Diaries: Paper Moon* by Louie Stowell, illustrated by Robin Boyden (Puffin)
- *Politics for Beginners* by Louie Stowell, Alex Frith and Rosie Hore, illustrated by Kellan Stover (Usborne)

### Other linked texts for reading aloud or independent reading:

- *Norse Myths: Tales of Odin, Thor and Loki* by Kevin-Crossley-Holland, illustrated by Jeffrey Alan Love (Walker Studio)

Praise for the **No.1 Bestseller**

**"Pure reading pleasure."** *The Guardian*

**"Laugh-out-loud funny."** *The Observer*

**"Perfect for fans of The Wimpy Kid."** *Daily Mail*

**"Defiantly childish and silly – and all the better for it."** *SFX, 5 stars*

**"Hugely entertaining from start to finish. A great choice for reluctant readers."** *BookTrust*

### Read the the series:



@WalkerBooksUK @LouieStowell

#### **Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good Teachers' Notes** © The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education

Text and Illustrations © 2022 Louie Stowell. You may use this teaching resource freely in your school but it cannot be commercially published or reproduced or used for anything other than educational purposes without the express permission of CLPE.

These Notes may contain links to third party websites. Walker Books does not endorse such website(s) or their contents and is not responsible for such contents and makes no representations or warranties regarding the contents, accuracy or functionality of such website(s)

WALKER  
BOOKS  
[walker.co.uk](http://walker.co.uk)