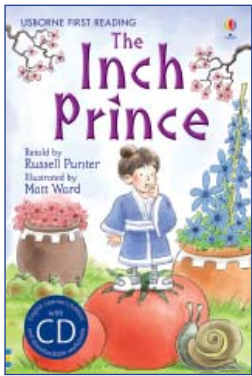


The Inch Prince • Teacher's notes



Author: traditional, retold by Russell Punter

Reader level: Intermediate

Word count: 903

Lexile level: 340L

Text type: Fable/folk tale from Japan

About the story

An elderly couple have everything they could want, except for a child; the old lady declares that she would love even a tiny child. A passing fairy grants their wish, and they have a little boy just one inch (2.5cm) tall. They name him Issun-boshi, One-inch boy, "or Issy for short". Issy grows up and goes to seek his fortune; he finds his way into the Emperor's palace and is given the job of guarding the princess. When the princess is snatched by an ogre, she is rescued by the resourceful Issy with his needle-sword. The princess tries to pick up the ogre's hammer; she wishes Issy were big enough to help, and he is magically transformed to full human size. Issy and the princess are married and live happily ever after.

About the author

Russell Punter was born in Bedfordshire, England. When he was young, he enjoyed making up and illustrating his own stories. His ambition as a boy was to become a cartoonist. When he grew up, he studied art at college before becoming a graphic designer and writer. He has written over twenty children's books.



Key words

Your students might not be familiar with some of these words, which are important in the story.

inch	squashed
p4 weeded	p23 guards
plot	marching
p5 watered	p29 oven
lilies	p30 throne
p6 teeny	bowed
fit	p33 moaned
p10 kind	p37 ogre
p11 waved	crashed
wand	grab
whispered	p39 scooped
folk	popped
p15 height chart	snacks
p16 shoelace	p40 pricked
matchbox	p41 spat
p19 chopsticks	hammer
p21 reached	p43 shot
p22 emperor	swept

Key phrases

p2	Once upon a time
p7	I wouldn't care if...
p11	their dearest wish
p12	teeny weeny
p13	for short
p15	to stand on tiptoe
p20	to set off
p23	At last
	up and down
p25	for a start
p30	Your Majesty
p31	Would you indeed?
p32	to look after
p34	he never left her side
p38	Put her down!
p40	Take that!
p41	to run off
	That will teach him
	to leave [something] behind
p45	to grant someone's wish

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Before reading

You could do a measuring activity with your class using rulers and everyday objects. If possible, use rulers with both inches and centimetres marked. Explain these different units of measurement to the students; you might like to clarify that the imperial system (inches, feet, yards and miles) was used around much of the world and is still the dominant measuring system in the USA, whilst the metric system originated in France and is now used throughout Europe, Asia and South America.

Divide the class into small groups and give each group a ruler. Ask the groups to measure a selection of objects in the classroom and write down their lengths. Then ask one person in each group to call out what their shortest and longest objects were, and their lengths. You could write the results on the board.

Show students the book's cover. What do they think an Inch Prince is? Show page 1 and explain that the picture shows the actual size of the prince (they can measure the picture to check if they like).

Ask students how people normally treat a prince (politely, with respect...) Do they think people will admire and respect a prince who is only one inch tall?

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Reading or listening

You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same. After the story, there is a short selection of key phrases that can be used for pronunciation practice.

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During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.

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|------|--|-----|--|
| p2-3 | Look at Mr. and Mrs. Ping's clothes and their house. What country do you think they live in? | p22 | Why do you think Issy wants to ask the emperor for a job? |
| p5 | Can you guess what else they might want? | p30 | What do most people think when they see Issy? |
| p6 | What's on Mr. Ping's head? Why do you think the cat is there? (Maybe there's no room for it to sleep anywhere else!) | p33 | Does the princess like her father's idea? Do you think the emperor is wise or foolish? |
| p12 | How do they feel about their son? | p38 | What words would you use to describe Issy here? |
| p15 | How old is Issy in this picture? And how tall? | p45 | Did the princess know it was a magic hammer? |
| p17 | What is Issy eating? (Grains of rice.) | p47 | Does the house in the picture remind you of another one? |
| p18 | How old do you think Issy is now? And how tall? Do his parents look worried for him? | | |
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After reading

Ask the class if they agree with the last sentence, that small things can be special. Can they think of any examples? [e.g. a jewel, a baby.]

Look again at pages 16-17 of the book. Ask the students what other things could be made for Issy out of everyday objects. What might Issy sit on or play with or write with?

You could do a model-making project in class to make things for Issy. Students' homework could be to find suitable empty packaging and scrap objects at home, then bring them in to make a room, a car or a playground for Issy. Small cardboard boxes and plastic bottle tops are especially useful, and you can use scraps of fabric or gift-wrap to decorate your models.

