

Operation Robot Storm by Alex Milway

Albrecht, Timonen and Saar are all yetis, who form the Mythical 9th Division. At the beginning of the story, Albrecht is interrupted whilst racing a Bigfoot from the Mythical 6th Division. According to the appendix at the end of the book, there are a total of 9 Mythical Divisions who together form the L.E.G.E.N.D.S. (League of Extraordinary and Genetically Enhanced Defence Squads), who help the United Nations against evil geniuses like Balaclava.

Ask pupils to talk to their partners about any other mythical beasts or tales of beings with special powers from other countries around the world they can think of – or if preferred pupils can research ancient Greek or Roman myths, folk tales from across the world, monsters from comic books and so on. What do they look like? What talents or special powers do they have? Similarly, ask pupils if they can think of any other criminal or evil masterminds from stories or films – e.g. the Green Goblin from Spiderman, the penguin from Wallace & Gromit's The Wrong Trousers, a Doctor Who monster.

Divide pupils into groups. Give some groups the task of forming another Mythical Division – not the 9th Mythical Division of Yetis or the 6th Mythical Division of Bigfoots, but the 1st/2nd/3rd etc Mythical Division of...? Ask the other groups to create an evil genius or monster for the Mythical Divisions to engage. Encourage the children to link the physical characteristics of their Mythical Division to their talents – what do they look like? what talents or special powers do they have? e.g. a Mythical Division of Scottish Loch Ness Monsters could travel everywhere underwater, or a Mythical Division of Minotaurs would be able to charge through doors like large bulls. Conversely, an evil genius could invent a red flag to distract Minotaurs, or evaporate all the lakes to stop the Loch Ness Monsters.

Write a short back story - either of the origins of the Mythical Division – how and where were they found, who discovered them, how did they interact with humans to join the United Nations L.E.G.E.N.D.S.? – or of how the evil genius became such a genius and so evil, why they got so angry with people and decided to become a criminal. Draw illustrations for your story, not just of your Mythical Division or evil genius but of any secret base or technological device used by either side.

Extension: Pair up groups of Mythical Divisions with evil geniuses. Ask the children who created the Mythical Division to write a story about how the evil genius initially triumphs over their Mythical Division, before they win out. Ask the children who created the evil genius to write a story about how their evil genius gets caught by the Mythical Division, before escaping to wreak more havoc. Where will your story take place? Are other people involved, like the young boy Gruff in the story? If you wish, mix and match so that different Mythical Divisions face different challenges, or allow Mythical Divisions and evil geniuses to team together...

Curriculum links:

English

Level 1: Pupils talk about matters of immediate interest. They listen to others and usually respond appropriately. They convey simple meanings to a range of listeners, speaking audibly, and begin to extend their ideas or accounts by providing some detail.

Level 2: Pupils begin to show confidence in talking and listening. On occasions, they show awareness of the needs of the listener by including relevant detail. In developing and explaining their ideas they speak clearly and use a growing vocabulary.

Level 3: Pupils talk and listen confidently in different contexts, exploring and communicating ideas. Through relevant comments and questions, they show they have listened carefully.

Level 4: Pupils talk and listen with confidence in an increasing range of contexts. Their talk is adapted to the purpose: developing ideas thoughtfully, describing events and conveying their opinions clearly. In discussion, they listen carefully, making contributions and asking questions that are responsive to others' ideas and views.

Design & Technology

Level 1: Pupils generate ideas. Their plans show that, with help, they can put their ideas into practice. They use pictures and words to describe what they want to do. They explain what they are making and talk about their own and other people's work in simple terms.

Level 2: Pupils generate ideas and use pictures and words to describe their designs.

Level 3: Pupils generate ideas and recognise that their designs have to meet a range of different needs. They clarify ideas when asked and use words and labelled sketches to communicate the details of their designs.

Level 4: Pupils generate ideas by collecting and using information. They take users' views into account and produce step-by-step plans. They communicate alternative ideas using words and labelled sketches.