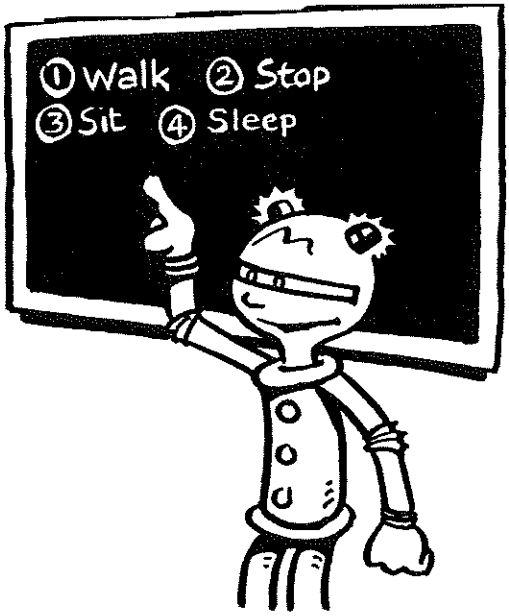
RULES

This unit uses stories and extended role-play to explore the theme of rule making and breaking, and the associated concepts of authority, power, justice and fairness, rights and responsibilities. The activities provide a basis for exploring the need for flexibility in the application of rules, the age at which children become responsible for their own actions in the eyes of the law and how relevant it is to consider intention in attributing blame.



Thinking Island – a role-play for Key Stage 1 or 2 90

The Great Hare-Brain – a story for Key Stage 1 97

Sally and the Green Paint – a story for Key Stage 1 or 2 103

The Making of Robots – a story for Key Stage 2 110

Confusion for Claire – a story for Key Stage 1 or 2 128

Thinking Island – a role-play

Key ideas

- making and breaking rules
- fairness
- rights
- keeping and sharing property
- democracy

This is an extended role-play which involves the practical making of encampments by shipwrecked or stranded people. As the role-play develops the groups have to explore ways of organising themselves, of developing roles and structures, of making rules and enforcing them. The storyline should be as flexible and open ended as possible.

The role-play could be used with children in Key Stage 1 or 2. As Key Stage 1 children appear to learn most effectively from first-hand experience (and this extends to many Key Stage 2 children) the suggested activity has a very practical basis. The activity may take a number of sessions preferably continuously over the course of the same day. A large area such as a hall or PE space will be required.

The encampments are made by the children using PE apparatus such as mats, hoops and ropes. Small PE equipment can be used to represent food, etc. Large pieces of material, eg, old sheets, blankets, etc, will be useful for roofing, doors and so on. Maths apparatus can be used for money.

Throughout the activity there will be critical points at which the role-play could be stopped for discussion depending on the situation or age of the children and the teacher's priorities. At each critical point groups decide what to do next in response to situations presented by the teacher or those which have arisen spontaneously. Because of its nature, the role-play can be more or less complex, as the teacher wishes. It may be wise to keep it simple the first time it is run and then develop it on future occasions.

Many cross-curricular links with history, geography, language and maths are possible.

At the end of the exercise each encampment could be judged and a "prize" (real – very important) given to the best one – but who decides on the "best"? What does the class think are the best criteria? What is the potential for unfairness?

Possible critical points

• Who are the shipwrecked people?
They could be children, families, a King or Queen and their slaves, sailors or a group of the children's choice. An alternative scenario might be explorers on a newly discovered continent or (if set in the future) a planet.

The various roles could be shared out by the teacher or the children could decide for themselves what they would like to be. The role-play might therefore progress as a series of separate scenarios or as a whole class improvisation in which all the groups are part of a larger scenario. In this case the early critical points will relate to the need for groups to develop their own rules and ways of working and later ones will involve relationships with the other groups.

• What resources are available?
The physical nature of the island might be established in initial activities – eg, are there more trees, food or water to be found in one area than another?

Who should have what? Why? Does the size of the group and/or its social nature, eg, families with young babies, alter the amount of resources allowed? Are there any animals in the local environment?

What is the territory of the group and how is it to be maintained or guarded?

Once children have made decisions on these issues they can make their encampments. (With younger children, it may be preferable to let them make their camps first and then address the problems posed either by the situation or the teacher.)

• The rights of group members
Who can share in the decision-making? Are all members of the group to be equal? If not, how will power be distributed? By status, age, or wealth? If the group needs one leader, how will he/she be appointed? Will the group be autocratically or democratically governed? Will the rule be by force or by rule of law?

• Making rules about . . . membership of the community
Will groups make their camps so as to keep out others? Who will be allowed in? When will they be allowed in? Who gets to stay? On what grounds would anyone be expelled from the group?

- **Making rules about . . . ownership of the camp**

Who should actually build the camp (ie, what is to be the division of labour)? Who is entitled to criticise or help in the construction? Who will make the final decision about how it should be built? Who does it actually belong to? How long can they own it? Who should mend it if it falls down?

- **Making rules about . . . respecting group member's property**

Each group owns the physical resources of the camp plus a certain amount of monetary wealth. Is everything belonging to the group to be communally owned? Are individuals allowed to own certain private items? How is wealth distributed within the group? What does this group (or society) count as valuable? How important is it if someone steals from another member of the group? How should they be punished? What would happen in the event of the group's property being vandalised?

(If it was felt that vandalism or theft was an important point for that particular group or was a significant school issue it might be possible to leave the camps over a playtime and arrange for certain "things" to happen – possibly to the whole island and its camps or just to one or two of them. The group or whole class would then need to consider how seriously it took the damage and how to deal with the situation.)

- **Breaking the rules and delivering justice**

Draw up a list of behaviours the group will not allow. How are the rules to be enforced? What happens to people who break the laws? Ask each group to develop a way of dealing with thieves and violent group members when they are accused of a "crime".

Is it important to the group or groups to develop mechanisms for the fair treatment of people who break the law? What if different groups treat offenders differently? Is this fair? Should there be a court or judge or jury to decide on punishments?

- **Communication**

Communication – how would they convey or publicise the decisions or rules they have each made within their own group? What happens if people act in ignorance of the rules? Is this an excuse or defence?

- **Competition or co-operation**

Will individual members of the group (or the groups as a whole) decide to compete against each other or co-operate when the need arises? Are there situations when one is more appropriate than the other?

Specific small group scenarios

These could be provided to the groups on slips of paper or by briefing group members orally. The groups can act out the situations or can treat them as decision-making exercises. In other words, the roles of individual offenders need not always be taken on. The group could discuss the problem in their absence. Decisions about how to organise this may depend on the age and maturity of group members.

- Somebody develops an emotional attachment to something which is needed by the group. For example, she or he wants to sit on a flat rock looking out to sea for possible rescuers, but this is one of the only places to build a shelter.
- Somebody is trying to do too much on their own. What does the group do?
- A woman member of the group complains that the men are refusing to help care for the young ones. What will the group decide about gender roles?
- A member of the group finds something buried which they think is valuable and want to keep. Should it belong to the whole group or be shared equally amongst its members?
- Two members of the group both want to be the leader and are constantly arguing and contradicting each other.
- An argument breaks out in the group between two members, eg, someone is being lazy and refusing to help. How is this to be resolved?
- The watch-fire goes out. The person responsible has exposed the group to danger from attack. What is to be done to prevent this happening again and how should the guard be dealt with?
- There is an outbreak of 'plague'. Someone gets ill and the whole group is in danger. How does the whole group deal with this?
- One of the grown-ups is being unkind to the children of which he/she is in charge. The grown-up claims the children deserve it and need strict discipline. What rules can the group develop about the rights of children in the group?

The "Island Council"

Whole group problems

When the small groups are well established, and have discussed one or two problems, you could announce that it will be necessary to form an "Island Council" to resolve some problems faced jointly by all the groups. Explain that,

for a variety of reasons, it will be better if all the groups agree on a common way of solving these problems.

Ask each group to elect one person to be its representative at the "Island Council". Give each group a slip setting out one or two of the problems below. Ask each group to decide what they think should be done about it and then, on a given signal, convene the "Island Council".

Ask the councillors to sit in an inner circle (on the floor) with the rest of the class (on chairs?) around the outside.

Ask the councillors to discuss the problems on behalf of their groups and then vote on the issue at the end. Groups must decide whether to allow a free vote.

- One group builds a shelter near the only stream. They begin to drink it and wash in it; all other shelters then find that the water they are using is dirtied by the first group to use it.

  How can a clean water supply be ensured for all the groups?

- One group wants to go to a new part of the island to live, jeopardising the safety and survival of the whole group.

- A tree falls on to a shelter rendering one group homeless. How will the other groups see their responsibility? Will they co-operate and help or not? Are agreements (contracts) between the groups necessary to govern events like this in the future?

- An outsider or invader comes and says they must not build shelters where they have built them (or equivalent). Or, they claim that the land was theirs all along and the groups are all trespassers and must leave.

- The rains fail and food and water become very scarce. Some of the older folk begin to hoard food, looking after themselves first and putting the needs of the group second. There is a need for groups to help each other.

Thinking Island – an alternative approach

As an alternative to the above method, it is possible to construct groups with prescribed roles for each member of the group. Once they have been given or chosen a role, everything they do in the group should be based on that role. In this scenario each person has a major role plus one piece of equipment which he or she can use, either for their own benefit or the benefit of others.

Suggested roles are:

- an elderly person, with a food container to keep things fresh;
- a doctor, with medicines;
- a merchant or business person, with money;
- a sailor, with a knife;
- a traveller, with a water bottle; and
- a baby (represented by a bundle).

A number of scenarios are presented below which can be presented in a sequence. However, it is not necessary to do all of these, although some of them fit together to form a natural flow of events. Much will depend on the amount of time available and the extent to which the activity has taken off.

Day 1
If the group is to survive, you must sort out who is going to do what. The group will need hunters, cooks, a baby minder, guards and builders.

Day 2
While the hunters are away, the cook and the guard have a terrible argument. They are close to physical violence. When the hunters return, they must try to resolve the problem. It appears to be time that some basic rules were established to enable the group to work together.

Day 3
The baby minder has been neglecting his or her duties. How does the group cope with this? Will it be by persuasion or threat? The group now needs to think about punishments for those who break the rules. What will these be and how will the group establish guilt?

Day 4
Two of the hunters find some valuable treasure which they bring back to the group. They argue that they should be allowed to keep it, but not everyone agrees. What is a fair way of resolving this problem and establishing some guidelines for the future?

Day 5
The group wakes up to find that someone has stolen most of its food. There is only enough left for four people. How should it be shared out?. (Don't forget the baby!)

Day 6
Now all the group is starving hungry except the elderly person who isn't suffering. Then it is discovered that he or she is hiding a store of food. The elderly person claims that someone must have hidden the food in his or her things to throw the blame onto them. How will the group resolve this?

Day 7
The cook has poisoned the group because some wild berries were found and thrown into the stew. The doctor says there is only enough medicine for four people. Everyone pleads for their own lives and the group has to decide how to pick those who must die. On what basis should this choice be made? Whoever is sacrificed has to leave the group to die in the bushes alone. Their possessions are shared out amongst the others.

Day 8
It turns out that those who left the group, have made a rapid recovery overnight and return the following day angry at having been the ones left to die. On rejoining the group, they are angry at what has happened to their possessions and resentful at being rejected. How will the group deal with this problem in such a way as to restore good relations?

The Great Hare-Brain

Key ideas

- rules
- responsibility and wrong doing
- choosing friends
- group behaviour
- gender roles

This story is about a group of animals who go into someone's house because they are persuaded to do so by Gregson, the Hare, who won't listen to his friends when they suggest it might be wrong. Apart from rule-breaking, the story provides the opportunity to consider why actions may be wrong or harmful and whether you can be to blame if you break a rule unintentionally. Also raised is the issue of the importance of choosing friends. The story is probably most appropriate for use with Key Stage 1 or lower Key Stage 2 children.

Below are some of the issues you could explore arising from this story. Remember to ask the children if they would like to raise any issues of their own for discussion.

Moral reasoning

- What rules did the animals break that you would consider to be good rules? Why are they good rules?
- Which of the animals do you think behaved most badly (who was the naughtiest of the animals)? Take a class vote on a simple show of hands. (The children might well say that Gregson was the naughtiest.) Now make a list on the board of what each animal did and decide whether the animals each knew what they were doing was wrong.

  Gregson – thought it was alright to go into the house. Was he wrong not to listen to what his friends were saying? He said there was no notice saying that other animals couldn't go in – did that make it alright? Why not?

  Delphine – knew that the flap was only for cats. Was she wrong to go into the house? Why? Did she have to go in?

Digby – did he do wrong to eat the dog biscuits? Why or why not? Did he seem to know it was wrong to go into the house?

Suky – had serious doubts about going into the house. If she did, wasn't she wrong to follow the others? Why did she not try to persuade the others not to follow Gregson? Should she have stayed outside the house and waited for the others if she had doubts?

- **Aiding and abetting**
  Jason was out with his friends having a bit of fun. They found a house which was empty and decided to break a few windows with stones. Jason kept lookout along the street whilst the others threw the stones. Unfortunately for them a man came into the garden through a back alley and caught the friends, who then told on Jason. The friends were charged with criminal damage. Jason said he wasn't to blame because he hadn't thrown any stones. Do you think he was right?

  Answer
  The law says that Jason is just as much to blame as the others because he was with them at the time of the crime and he knew what they were doing. In this case, he even helped them. But he would still be guilty, even if he had not actually helped and merely stood and watched.

Which is worse?

Ask the children in twos or small groups to discuss the following situations to decide which of each pair is more serious. These two sets of comparisons can help younger children distinguish between the seriousness of an action in terms of *consequences* and its seriousness in terms of the *intention* behind the act. Notice that younger children tend to think of right and wrong in concrete terms, identifying the wrongness of the act with the seriousness of the consequences.

Which is worse? – 1

- Sahel was playing a game on his friend Mike's computer when the car he was driving on the screen crashed yet again. In his anger and disappointment, he thumped his hand onto the keyboard touching several keys at once. The screen went blank. Sahel suddenly realised he had done something stupid and thought for a second about switching off the computer and pretending nothing had happened. Instead he went to Mike and admitted what he had done, saying sorry for being silly. The damage caused cost £5 to put right.

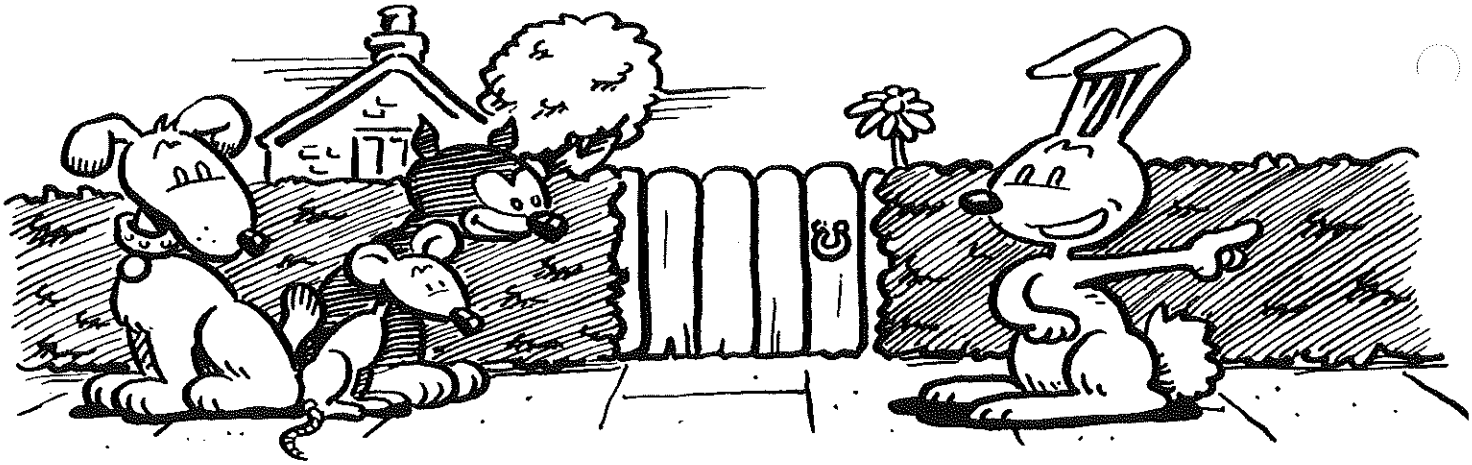
- Carol borrowed her friend Nadia's ruler to do some Maths. She kept it overnight to finish something off at home but when she came to look for it the next day, she found she had lost it. As she went to tell Nadia about what had happened, she found Nadia herself looking all through her bag for her ruler. Nadia had obviously forgotten she had lent it to Carol, so Carol decided to say nothing.

Which is worse? – 2

- Verity was in a bad mood because she had been told to go and help in the kitchen by her mother. As she went into the kitchen, she flung back the door so hard that it caused four cups to smash onto the floor and break.
- Adrian knew where Dad kept his chocolates. They were in a top cupboard in the kitchen. So one day when Dad was out, he climbed onto the work surface and reached up for the bag. Unfortunately, as he did so, he knocked down one of the best cups and it smashed to pieces.

Thinking things through

- Why are some rules written down and some not? Think of examples of both kinds. Are the written ones more important than the unwritten ones? For example, respecting others or being courteous are usually unwritten rules. Are they less important than written rules? If they are not less important, why aren't they written down?
- Were the friends in the story good for each other? How do we choose our friends? What does real friendship mean? Does friendship mean we always do what our friends want? (Think about the end of the story.)
- Who should choose our friends?
- In most groups, there are leaders. What makes a good leader of a group? Was Gregson a good leader? Would any of the others have been better?
- Why do people break rules or laws when they know it is wrong?
- Why do you think Gregson is a male hare in the story? Why is Suky a female? Would it have been better if the author had written the story with a female hare and male mouse? Give your reasons.



The Great Hare-Brain

The three friends, Digby the dog, Delphine the cat and Suky the mouse, had been quiet for a long time.

They'd each been thinking about different things. Delphine had been thinking about warm cat-baskets. Digby had been wondering how long it was since he'd had breakfast. He'd forgotten to count his dog biscuits that morning and he *thought* he'd been a few short . . . Suky had been thinking about why it was that other people couldn't hear you thinking. Maybe if you weren't a mouse they could. They were all waiting for their friend, Gregson the hare.

"Hello! Are you all waiting for me?" said Gregson. "I'm so glad you're all here; I've got a really good idea for a new explore. You're all going to *love* it!"

Delphine looked at Digby.

Digby looked at Suky.

Suky looked at the ground, as mice often do. She wished hares would listen to mouse ideas sometimes. She had an idea too.

"You see," said Gregson, "I've just noticed that some people's back doors have *little* doors in them and I'm pretty sure they've been put there for any of us animals to use as we like. Just free to come and go! Kind of open house, really."

Nobody said anything.

"Well, there's no notice on any of them saying we can't go in anyway," said Gregson.

"I'm not really sure you can go in like that," said Suky.

"Are you disagreeing with me?" said Gregson, crossly. "Now I think we should all visit these houses in turn since these people have been so kind as to leave their doors open for us. Besides, you never know what you might find."

"Well, . . ." said Suky.

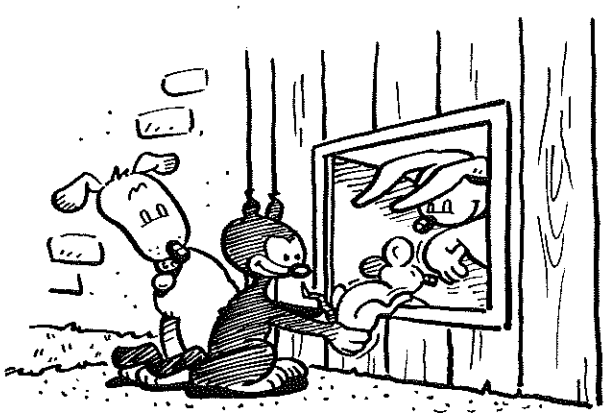
Gregson said, *"Well* this, and *well* that; if you don't look out it'll soon be a matter of well, well, mousy's down the well. Right everyone? Let's go!"

They got to the first door.

"Those are called cat doors," said Delphine. "I know about things like that."

"Exactly!" said Gregson. "Cat doors, dog doors, hare doors and . . . and . . ."

". . . mouse doors," said Suky quietly. "I keep having to tell him who I am. Sunday he thought I was a gerbil and yesterday he kept calling me a hamster. Mouse, that's what I am."



Gregson pushed the little door open with his paw. "Look! Easy, peasy!" he said.

The others climbed in after him.

Delphine had to help Suky in as she was so small. "I'm not at all sure about this," said Suky. "Why does Gregson think he can boss us about all the time?"

"Delphine," said Gregson, "why are you friends with that mouse? I don't think it's right – cats being friendly with mice."

"I'll do the choosing," said Delphine. "Where's Digby?" Digby was just finishing off a plate of dog biscuits. "So kind," he murmured, ". . . to leave them out specially for me."

Gregson bounded ahead.

"They've got a computer in this room!" He pressed all the buttons and the lights flashed and noises came out of the back of the machine.

"I'm a real whizz at this!" cried Gregson, and he pushed all the buttons down at once.

There was a large flash.

"Too *much* whizz," said Suky.

Gregson walked away from the computer to look for other interesting things in the room.

Then they heard a new noise. It was the sound of barking and it was getting closer.

"Quick, hide!" said Gregson. They all found different places to hide.

Gregson hid behind the carrots on the vegetable rack.

Delphine lay down behind a velvet cushion.

Digby climbed into the broom cupboard.

Suky hid behind a large ball of string.

The dog stopped barking and ate up the rest of the dog biscuits.

Digby felt very cross. He'd been saving those.

Just then a man came into the kitchen. "What are you doing in here?" he said to the dog. "Get out!"

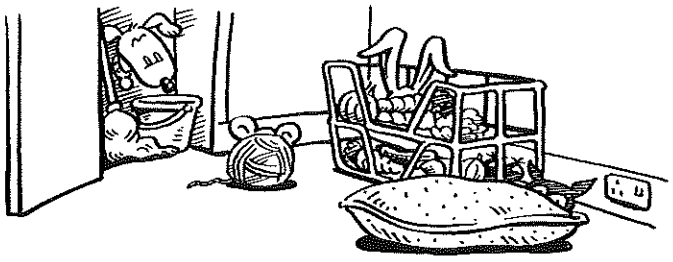
The dog scrambled very quickly out through the cat door.

"So *that's* how you got in, is it?" said the man. "I'll soon see about that! Wait a minute though – I thought I heard more than one animal in here."

He looked round. He couldn't see anyone, but something did look a bit odd.

He thought two carrots looked a bit furry.

There also seemed to be an extra velvet cushion.



The floor mop looked bigger than usual somehow, and the ball of string definitely now had two ends. "Odd," he said to himself, and he was just going to have a look when he heard a shout. "Dad, Dad! Someone's mucked up my computer! Come in here and have a look!"

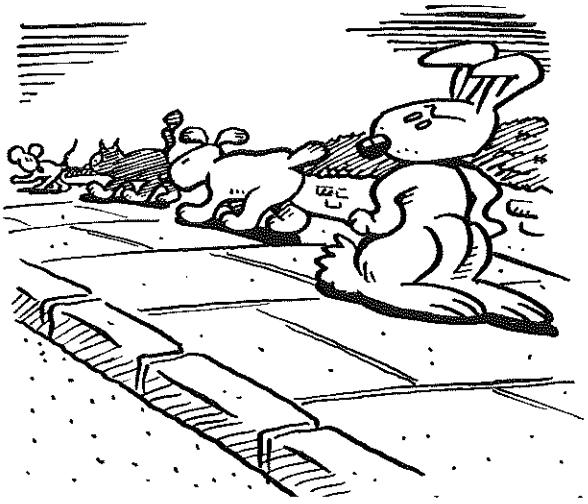
The man went into the next room to see what had happened. Quickly, the four friends left their hiding places and got out through the cat door.

"That was close!" said Digby.

"Very strange," said Gregson. "I can't think *why* he was so cross. And as for the fuss about the computer, I only pressed a few buttons, after all. Anyway, let's go and try the next door. Coming everyone?"

He looked round.

"Digby? Delphine? Suky? Where have you all gone?"



He looked up the road.

There they were, all following Suky.

"Oh," said Gregson. "I remember now – she did say *she'd* got an idea. Oh, well, maybe I should find out what it is – she may need my advice," and he started to bound up the road after them. "Wait for me!" he shouted, "I'm just coming!"

Sally and the Green Paint

Key ideas

- rule keeping and breaking
- fairness
- retaliation
- honesty
- loyalty

This short story uses a classroom incident, in which Sally gets into trouble for something she was not entirely responsible for, to pose questions about fair treatment, responsibility and the question of breaking a rule on moral grounds. Younger children have difficulty with the idea that it might be acceptable to break a rule, even for a good reason, so the dilemma faced by Deborah in the story is worth exploring. This story is likely to be most useful with Key Stage 2 pupils.

Below are some of the issues you could explore arising from this story. Remember to ask the children if they would like to raise any issues of their own for discussion.

Moral reasoning

- When Sally splashed Steven's painting with green paint, Steven retaliated by putting brown paint on hers. Is it right to retaliate like this? Think of some points in favour of retaliating and then some points against it.
- Was there something else Steven could have done, rather than retaliate? Would that have been better? Why?
- Why do you think teachers tell children in school not to retaliate if someone hits them? Do you agree?
- Discuss why children often find it difficult to complain to the teacher about someone's behaviour. "It is wrong to tell tales" is one of those unwritten rules which most people take notice of. When might it be right to "tell tales"? When might it be wrong?
- Who was to blame for the quarrel between Sally and Steven?

- Does Sally have any kind of excuse for painting badly on the class picture? What would you say to Sally which might persuade her to do her best painting?
- Was Deborah right or wrong to go against Mrs Blake's instructions when she helped Sally clear up the paint? Why?
- Should Sally have refused to let Deborah help her? Why?
- Was Sally treated unfairly by Mrs Blake in any way, in your opinion?
- Do you think Deborah was right to tell a lie to the lunchtime supervisor? Why did she do it, in your opinion? Was it the best thing to do? Give reasons for your answer.
- Is there any difference between the lie Sally told and the one Deborah told? If so, what? Which was the worse lie?

Thinking things through

- Is it ever right to break a rule? If so, what makes it right?
- There was a rule that children were not allowed in the classroom at lunchtime. Was that a good rule? What makes a good rule?
- List all the reasons you can think of why people break rules.
- If someone decides to break a rule for a good reason, does that make it a bad rule?
- Deborah was prepared to take a risk to help Sally. Why was that? Was it wise?
- What are friends for? What do we get out of our friendships and what should we put into them? Why do we seem to be more friendly with some people than with others?
- Is it worse to be unkind to our friends than to people we are not friendly with?
- Is it a less good action to be kind to someone we like, than to be kind to someone we do not like?
- It's often said that "honesty is the best policy". What does this mean and do you agree with the saying? Why is honesty a good thing? Think of as many reasons as you can. Make a list of them, first in pairs, then as a class.
- Why might it sometimes be right not to be honest?

Community building

- Talk about how quarrels can often get out of hand. How can this be prevented?
- What did Deborah feel towards Sally? How do you know?
- How do your emotions and feelings affect the way you behave?
- If someone has a strong temper, how are others affected? Are there ways in which other people can help that person?

Personal writing

- Write a story about a time when someone is hurt by a friend and retaliates in some way. Show how situations can easily get out of hand. Perhaps you could base it on something which has happened to you.

Sally and the Green Paint

It was Thursday morning – the day Sally had been waiting for all week. This was when the class did sewing and Sally would be able to finish what she had been carefully working on for four weeks now. It was her best piece of sewing ever and she just knew her Mum would be so pleased with it. Mum's old peg bag had suddenly fallen apart one day and Sally had been struck by the idea of actually making Mum a new one at school.

Mrs Blake had been very helpful, showing Sally how to cut out the material to the right shape and how to sew the two halves strongly together. Now all she had to do was finish off the pattern she had designed for the back of the bag. It was based on the idea of a huge bright orange sun with lots of flowers around the outside. Just the thing for a garden. Today, there were only a few more daisies to do and then it would be finished – just in time for Mum's birthday, which was tomorrow.

As Mrs Blake entered the classroom, Sally felt a thrill of excitement but it didn't last long.

"Now listen carefully, everyone," said Mrs Blake, "today we're not going to do our sewing. We're going to do something much nicer instead. We're going to work together on a big picture for the hall."

And before she knew it, Sally and the rest of the class were standing around a massive expanse of paper spread across the floor. Normally, Sally would have loved this. She liked anything artistic, and not only because you didn't have to write anything, but today she was quietly boiling inside.

This was going to ruin her wonderful surprise. Everything had gone so well but now all her careful planning and hard work were going to be wasted. Okay, she could give Mum her present next week but it wouldn't be the same at all. As Sally was turning over in her mind what to do about it, Mrs Blake began giving out instructions.

"Rowan and Dennis, you take this blue paint and begin on the sky and Sally, you start at the bottom with lots and lots of nice green leaves growing on a tree in the corner of the picture. Now Karamjit and Cheryl..."

As Mrs Blake continued to organise things, Sally switched off. Nice green leaves! What was nice about them? She thought for a second or two about asking Mrs Blake if she could carry on with her sewing, but she knew Mrs Blake well enough to know what she would say. As she began to paint Sally knew she wasn't doing it properly but she didn't care. She didn't want to enjoy it and she didn't want her tree to look any good. But

then the thought struck her that she might just get the peg bag done if she stayed in at lunch time (though she would have to get permission) and at that she brightened up a little.

"Sally! Stop it, you're splashing my brown bear," said Steven, who was working next to her.

"Good," said Sally, under her breath. Then to Steven she said, "Anyway, it looks better with green spots. It's a green spotted Brown Bear. They're very rare. You should be pleased."

"Pack it in!" protested Steven, and he began to dab brown spots all over Sally's green leaves like patches of mould.

At that Sally dipped her brush right to the bottom of her paint pot and smothered Steven's Bear with green paint, just as if it had been in the middle of a green smoke bomb explosion.

"Sally and Steven, what are you doing?" demanded Mrs Blake, across the room.

"She started it, Miss. She started flicking spots on my brown bear," Steven whined.

"I couldn't help it, Miss. He put brown paint on my leaves," Sally retorted, bending the truth just enough, without actually tell a straight lie.

"Steven, go and work at the other end of the picture and help Deborah with those birds."

"But, Miss – ," Steven protested but Mrs Blake wasn't listening. She almost knew Steven would be involved in something although she hadn't expected it quite so early in the lesson. "And Sally, say sorry to Steven, and get on with your own painting without splashing everything for miles around."

For a few moments, Sally felt quite good at getting off more lightly than Steven. But it wasn't long before the thought of Mum's unfinished peg bag popped back into her mind. For the rest of the lesson, Sally dabbed away at the picture, painting the strangest shaped leaves you could imagine. After a while even that got boring and so Sally went to ask Mrs Blake if she could do something else. But after the incident with Steven, Mrs Blake said no she could not and if Sally was bored with painting leaves, then perhaps she would take more care next time so that she could get something more interesting to do.

Sally almost stamped back to her corner and angrily snatched up the paint pot. But in her mood she failed to grasp the pot properly and it slipped out of her hand. As it hit the floor, green paint splashed in all directions. Fortunately most of it fell on the floor and not on the picture. Sally examined her clothes. There were certainly spots of green paint on her shoes and socks and on her hands and her first feeling was of relief, but then she realised that something was

odd. Some of the paint on her hands was blue. But she hadn't used blue that morning! She picked up the paint pot and looked at it carefully. There were all sorts of colours on the outside of the pot but when she came to look again at it she could see that the blue paint was still wet! Someone had covered her pot with blue paint when she was talking to Mrs Blake.

Sally knew who it was. She glared across at Steven but he seemed to be the only child in the class who was still absorbed in his work. Everyone else was staring at the mess. And so was Mrs Blake.

"Sally! What is the matter with you this morning! How dare you behave like this, just because I said you couldn't paint something else. Now you'll have to clear up that whole mess and stay in at lunch time until it's finished. As it is everyone else can pack away their things and get ready for dinner."

Louise, one of Sally's best friends, came over to help her but Mrs Blake told everyone to stand still, just where they were, and listen.

"I have told Sally to clean up that mess because she's behaved very badly this morning, so I don't want Louise or anyone else helping Sally in any way. Is that clear? And remember there is a rule about being in the classroom at lunchtime without permission. If I catch anyone, there will be trouble."

The classroom emptied and Sally hurried to the sink to fetch the cloth and bowl. But as she came to inspect the mess she could not believe what she saw. The paint had splattered over a huge area and the more she looked around, the more Sally could see green spots scattered far and wide, even on the walls, as if the classroom had developed a special kind of measles.

Now she finally knew that all hope of finishing Mum's present had gone and a wave of disappointment and anger swept over her. It was all so unfair. As she got down on her knees with the cloth, her tears fell onto the floor and began to make streaks in the green. Sally was so wrapped up in her misery that she didn't notice a movement at her side.

"Sally, what's up?" said a voice. It was Deborah. "I saw you crying through the window."

"What are you doing here?" said Sally.

"I came to see if you were all right. Why are you crying? It's only paint."

Then Sally told Deborah all about not being able to finish the peg bag and how that had put her in a bad mood and led to the business with the paint between her and Steven. This time she told the truth.

"Well, I'll help you," said Deborah. "Then you still might be able to finish the bag."

"But Mrs Blake said you mustn't," Sally protested. "You'll get into trouble. You haven't got permission."

"Well," said Deborah," surely Mrs Blake wouldn't really mind if she knew the truth about the blue paint and your mum's birthday tomorrow."

"I don't know," said Sally. "She's very strict about some things."

"But the rule is to stop the classroom from being wrecked, isn't it? We're not wrecking it, we're cleaning it up. And, anyway, you don't really deserve to be doing it all on your own, because it was only partly your fault. Well, that's what I think anyway. Come on, there may still be time."

"But what if you get caught?" Sally said.

"Maybe, I won't," said Deborah.

Somehow, the fact that Sally wasn't now on her own encouraged her to work hard at the cleaning up and by half way through the lunch hour they had almost finished. Just then, one of the lunchtime supervisors came to enquire what they were doing. Deborah said they had been told to stay in and clean up the mess and they were left alone.

So Sally, after all, was able to get out her sewing and with Deborah's help (and half of her packed lunch) she had almost completed the last flower by the beginning of the afternoon. If Mrs Blake would let her take it home tonight, everything would be fine after all.

In fact, when Sally asked Mrs Blake to check her sewing at home time, Mrs Blake was very pleased with the result.

"Sally, this is very good," she said, approvingly. "But you must have finished it last week. Why didn't you show it to me then? You could have taken it home before now."

Sally hesitated, not knowing how to answer.

"I suppose you wanted to keep it a secret, did you?" said Mrs Blake.

"Yes, Miss," Sally replied, "that's it. I like secrets." And in her head she added, "and not just secrets from Mum."

The Making of Robots

Key ideas:

- rules and laws
- motives for behaviour
- rights and responsibilities
- equality and inequality
- prejudice and discrimination

In this story, which is set in the future on the planet Zeptron, the home of the Vygots, Elinder, who trains robots to do menial work, realises that some of the robots have started to think for themselves. Taking the view that the robots have a right to be allowed to develop as far as they can, Elinder feels she has to break the Vygot law in order to follow what she sees as a higher principle, her duty as a teacher. Her friend Tegapi, is more pragmatic. He is sympathetic but has doubts about what it will mean for Vygot society in the long run. A third character, Atrun, resists change because he believes his over-riding duty is to be a "good citizen" and to obey the law because that is the best way to maintain the status quo, which he does not question. He fails to recognise that the robots have any claim to equality of status with the Vygots.

Throughout the story, different levels of motivation are displayed by the characters and this can usefully be explored. Teachers are referred to the description of different levels of moral reasoning in the introduction to this material.

The story can be used as a kind of allegory for societies in which dominant groups maintain control over other groups, denying others the rights they would expect for themselves. There is division over whether the robots who can now think for themselves do have equal claims to "personhood". This situation would parallel societies which have built their discriminatory practices on the belief that the minority group was in fact less advanced than the majority and therefore it was legitimate to discriminate against them.

Others might see in the story the issue of "education versus training". To take an historical example, arguments were put forward in the last century against the education of the working classes and women on the grounds that this would create social instability. In other words, some people saw the role of education as fitting people into a pre-determined social slot, irrespective of their ability or rights to education for its own sake.

Below are some of the issues you could explore arising from this story. Remember to ask the children if they would like to raise any issues of their own for discussion.

Chapter 1

Moral reasoning

- Ask the children, working in pairs, to decide what Elinder and Tegapi should do about the future of the robots. Ask them to jot down all the reasons why they think this.
- Ask the children to share their ideas and discuss them together as a class, writing different reasons for and against educating the robots on the board.
- Ask the children to look for different reasons offered by Tegapi and Elinder and write these up on the board also, asking the children why they thought this as you write them up. At the end, take a class vote on what the characters should do.
- Ask the class if it can ever be right to break the law of a country or the rule of a school or family? Encourage them to give examples *and to say why it might be right.*

Note: some of the reasons for action given in chapter one are:

Against educating the robots:

- Educating the robots, as opposed to training them, is against Vygot law.
- The teachers have a duty to the community to do as they have been asked and therefore it would be wrong to go against their duty.
- Change brings uncertainty. More people might be harmed than will benefit.
- If nothing more is done for the robots, they will not actually know that their "rights" have been denied them so, arguably, it does not matter.
- The robots are the property of the Vygots to do with them as they please.

- Elinder and Tegapi could lose their jobs if they encourage the robots towards more independence.

In favour of educating the robots:

- The robots are capable of living a higher level of life and therefore the Vygots would be wrong to deny them the opportunity.
- In showing they have a level of self-awareness, the robots have shown themselves to be more than mere machines. They now have "rights" to self fulfilment.
- Once you believe something is morally right, you have to do it, even if there is a rule or a law against it.
- The Vygots cannot have dual standards, expecting freedom for themselves, whilst denying it to others who are essentially similar.
- Elinder would not be happy in a society deliberately based on the principle of inequality.

Thinking things through

- Is Elinder right in thinking that these robots have rights?
- What would we say are rights in the sense in which this story uses the word?
- Do machines have rights? If not, why not? If we say the thinking robots in the story have rights of their own, at what point did these rights start to exist?
- Would a thinking robot have the same rights as an animal or a human? Do animals have rights? If so, what would they be and where do they come from (or on what basis can we claim they have rights)?
- Do rights have to be granted by someone or can people claim rights for themselves? Think about what has happened in the past when people without rights have claimed rights for themselves.
- If you think something is right, do you have to do it?
- Elinder and Tegapi have a long conversation about what is the right thing to do. Where do our ideas about right and wrong come from?
- Can you think of a time you did something when you knew it was wrong, or did not do something you knew to be right? Why was that? Why don't we always act in the way we should?

Community building

- What do you think it might *feel* like to be a member of a group which is discriminated against or treated worse than other groups for no good reason? Have you ever experienced that?
- Do you think you would feel happy being part of a strong (dominant) group which was treating another group badly? Do you know about people or groups who are treated unfairly for any reason? Do you know of any societies in which groups are treated unfairly because of their gender, race, skin colour, religion or any other reason?

Chapter 2

Moral reasoning

- In this chapter look for people who seem to be thinking only about themselves and look for people who think about other people or the community. Make a class list under two headings:

  For others **For themselves**

  Which of these sets of reasons is better, in your opinion. Why is that?

- Here are some actions which might be done by people for different reasons, some selfish, some less selfish. For each of these actions make up some reasons as to why people might be acting:

  for themselves;

  for other people; or

  for the community.

  For example, in the first scenario, someone might jump traffic lights just because they cannot be bothered to wait (selfish reason) or they might be rushing a friend to hospital (for others) or they might be hurrying to the scene of an explosion in order to help (action for the community).

  Someone jumps the traffic lights, nearly causing a serious accident.

  Someone helps an elderly person across the road.

  Someone picks up a lot of litter in the playground at school.

  Someone jumps off a bus without paying.

  Someone tells a lie.

- Tegapi was worried that, if the experiment continued, the robots might eventually rebel against the Vygots. Would the robots be wrong to do that? Think about the reasons on either side of this question.
- Elinder wants the Vygot people as a whole to support the education of robots. If they vote against this, should she abide by the wish of the majority? If you disagreed with a class vote on something, would it be right to ignore the vote?

Thinking things through

- Atrun feels that rules must be obeyed. Do you agree with him? Why or why not? Complete the sentence "Rules are good because..." with as many reasons as you can think of. Now complete the sentence "Rules can be bad because . . ." in the same way.
- Why do some people find it awkward when others begin to think for themselves? Can you think of examples?
- Why do you think Elinder says "The more like us they [robots] become the better it will be for all of us." Do you agree with her? What might be the consequences for life on Zeptron?
- Tegapi is nervous of change. What changes in society would you like to see? Is change a good thing or a bad thing?
- Talk about the idea of equality between people. In what ways are people equal and in what ways are they different? Is it possible to have any society in which everyone is equal?
- What is the difference between "equal" and "same"? Make up some sentences with these words in them to show their different meanings.
- Elinder hopes that the Vygots as a whole will support her. She hopes that they will decide democratically. What is democracy and is it the best way to run groups or societies? What other ways are there?
- Schools are a kind of society. Should they be democratic? If not, should the children have any say in the running of things? If so, what kind of say could they have?

Community building

- How does it feel to be treated badly when you cannot do much about it?
- Elinder feels very strongly about educating the robots. What things do you feel strongly about? What makes you angry? Why?

Chapter 3

Moral reasoning

- Kapulak described Atrun as a "good citizen" for reporting Tegapi and Elinder. Do you agree? What is a "good citizen"?
- Out of the four Vygots in this story, which of them acts as a good citizen in your opinion? Give your reasons. Think about each one in turn.
- The robots cannot agree amongst themselves about whether or not to escape from Zeptron. As a class, make a list of the arguments on either side and take a vote on whether you think they should stay or go.
- When Elinder started working with only a few robots, was she being unfair to all the others? Why or why not?
- What did Kapulak mean when he said Tegapi was not "loyal or obedient"? To whom or what was Tegapi loyal and obedient? In your opinion, what should he have been loyal to?
- What do you think about the way Tegapi and Elinder were treated at the end of the story? Was it fair? Why or why not? What would you have done if you had been in a position to decide how to punish them?
- What do you think about the way the robots were treated? Was it fair or not? What are your reasons for saying that?
- If Elinder and Tegapi had known their plan would not succeed, should they have gone on with it?

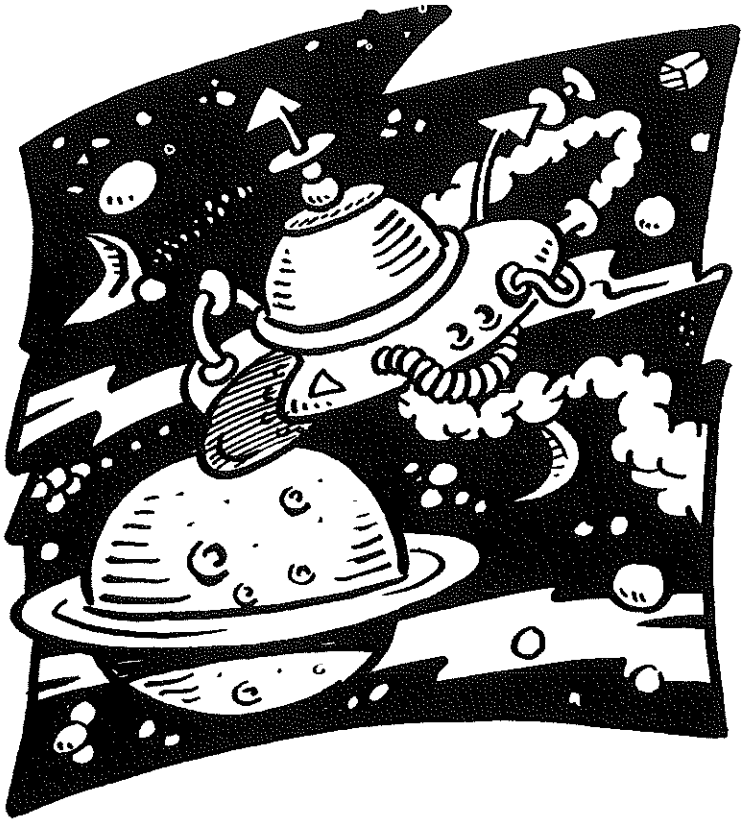
Thinking things through

- Tegapi and Elinder followed their own conscience or principles. Where do we get our consciences from? Are they always right?
- In the story, the Code Book is seen to contain all the rules of the Vygot community. Why do all groups and societies have rules? What jobs do the rules do? Give examples from the story and your own experience.
- Why do you think the Vygot trials were always held in public before the whole community? Is this a good or a bad idea?
- Tegapi often seemed uncertain about what to do. Why do people sometimes find it hard to decide? Why do people sometimes think one thing and do another?

- Which of the characters in the story do you admire most? Put them in order. Compare your order with other people's and explain your reasons. What characteristics do we most admire in other people? Why do you think that is?
- What is your feeling about the ending of the story? Is it happy or sad? Would you have preferred a happier ending? If so, what might it have been? You could share your ideas as a class on this.
- In many stories, there is a struggle between good and bad. In most stories the "goodies" win. Why do you think this is? Is it always true to life?
- A lot of this story is about education. Think of all the reasons why people have to go to school. Which do you think are the best reasons? Is education always a good thing?
- A lot of this story has been about the rights of "people" to be treated with respect. Draw up a list of your own, setting out some basic human rights. Find out which of these rights are in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Community building

- Think about the rules in your own school. Why are they there? Think of as many as you can, including the rules relating to, for example, compulsory subjects, violence, discrimination, compulsory school assembly and so on. Discuss whether these rules can have disadvantages as well as advantages.
- Would you like to see any school rules, or the way they are enforced, changed or improved? Could some rules be better enforced, such as rules against not bullying in the playground?
- Why are some rules very difficult to enforce all the time (eg, against name calling)? Does this mean they are bad rules? What would make people more likely to obey them?
- Elinder accused Atrun of being a coward. Have you ever felt afraid to do something? Why?

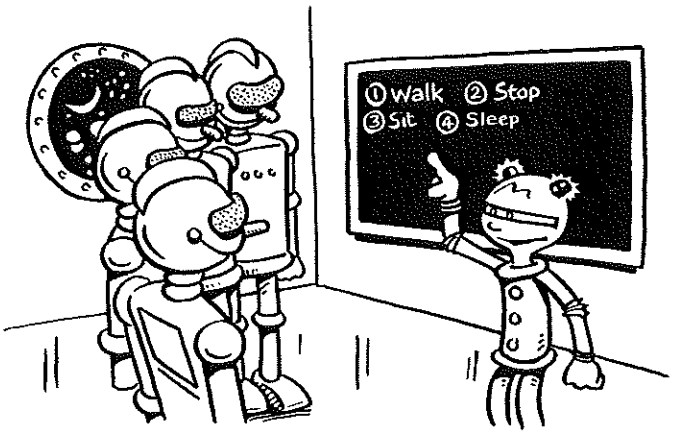


The Making of Robots

Chapter 1

Zeptron was one of the smallest planets in its galaxy. It didn't have rivers of ice or huge volcanoes. It had no super-cities or fancy space farms, but it was home to the Vygots who were a race of very advanced machine-like creatures capable of speech and thought equal to any human being. No one knew who had developed the Vygots originally but it was thought that some of them had been brought to Zeptron and abandoned at some point. Since they could build copies of themselves, the Vygots began to develop a community of their own on Zeptron. Over the centuries they had also developed more advanced brains and had even begun to have feelings of pleasure, disappointment or anger.

All Vygots had particular jobs to do on the planet, but because of their high intelligence they disliked some types of work, like building roads, because these were boring and hard. For this kind of work they used robots who were trained to do as they were told and who could be replaced very cheaply when they wore out. The Vygot in charge of the Robot Training School was called Tegapi.



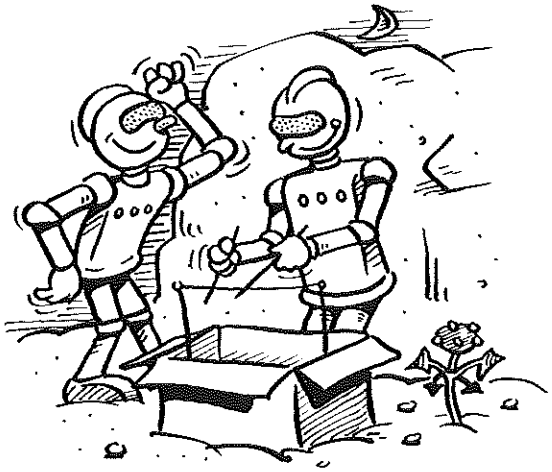
The day on which this story begins was the beginning of the third week of a new Robot Training Course. Tegapi was checking on the progress of the robots and smiled to himself in satisfaction as he noticed that most of the robots seemed to be making excellent progress. One or two were learning very quickly indeed. By the end of the eight weeks they would be a highly skilled bunch of robots. Tegapi was pleased. He was proud of his Training School, which was the best on Zeptron.

Not that training robots was as simple as it sounds. Sometimes these new robots, especially the latest models, which were equipped with quite advanced intelligence centres, would become quite disobedient but a quick electric shock soon put them down again. No one was quite sure how it was that they got these moods on them, and truth to tell, no one ever thought to find out.

When work was finished, Tegapi set off back to his home base, taking his usual route which was past a large outcrop of rocks. The Zeptron sun was setting behind the rocks in a marvellous red blaze of colour. As he looked away Tegapi thought he saw a glint of light on something moving over near the rocks. Looking a little harder he got the distinct impression that he saw something move and what was a little worrying was that it looked to Tegapi like a robot.

Tegapi silently approached the rock, intending to give whoever it was a shock. But as he peered around the corner of the rock he saw something he had not seen in all his thousands of years.

Two robots with metal rods in their grippers were touching some wires which they had fixed across the top of an empty delivery box. The result was almost musical. It wasn't accidental, he was sure of that. As he watched, he could see the robots doing it on purpose. Then one of them stopped striking the wires and started moving about to the rhythm of the sound waves. There was no doubt about it, these robots had discovered for themselves how to make music and dance!



Tegapi's first reaction was to smile at the faintly comical sight in front of him but he quickly became very bothered indeed. His orders were set out strictly in a Code Book. The Code Book contained all the laws of the Vygot

community and it was an unwritten rule that all good Vygots kept strictly to these laws. As he watched the robots, it appeared to Tegapi that something was happening within their artificial intelligence which was out of control. They were actually becoming creative. Tegapi thought this might explain why some of them had been behaving badly – perhaps it was boredom!

Tegapi wondered what to do. Should he tell someone? Or should he simply order the robots to stop what they were doing? They were breaking the rules and were running the risk of being disconnected for good. It wasn't that they were being deliberately disobedient, but they were certainly behaving very differently from any other robots Tegapi had seen.

He needed time to think and someone to talk to. Perhaps he would mention it to Elinder, who was his second-in-command. She would understand. She always seemed able to think about things from every angle, like a chess player. On second thoughts, perhaps he should tell Atrun who was another robot trainer. Atrun was less likeable than Elinder and had no sense of humour, but he did know the rule book inside out. Perhaps somewhere in the rules they could find something about what to do in a situation like this.

Tegapi quietly backed away from the rock but as he did so he realised that he had bumped into something that wasn't there earlier. It was Elinder and he could tell at once that she had also seen what the robots were doing. She didn't say anything, but signalled that she was going to move away. Tegapi followed her until the rock and the robots were out of sight.

"What did you make of that?" said Tegapi. Elinder didn't reply at first but checked that there were no other Vygots within hearing distance.

"It looks to me as if we have been under-estimating the robots all along," she said. "Some of them, at least, have developed intelligence circuits which makes them curious and actually think for themselves. Also, this music and dancing thing. It's – well – a bit spooky."

"What do you mean?" said Tegapi.

"Well, thinking is one thing," Elinder said, "but if the robots are *creative* as well – doesn't it mean they want to do things for pleasure, or for their own sake? That isn't the behaviour of mere robots, is it? It certainly means there's more to them than metal and plastic. Doesn't it really mean that now there is no difference at all between Vygots and robots?"

"We don't know they're all like that, of course," Tegapi said, thinking aloud. "Most of the robots just do as they're told."

"But maybe that's because we haven't shown them how to do anything else,"

replied Elinder. "One or two of the brightest ones have worked things out for themselves but who knows what the others could do if we helped them?"

"You're right," Tegapi said, "perhaps they could even learn our language, if we really bothered to teach them." Elinder was excited at the thought.

"And I'd love to teach them how to make better music," she said. "We could even learn together! Think of that!"

But suddenly Tegapi's expression changed.

"But hold on," he said, with a frown, "we can't do this. It will change everything, do you see? Once the robots realise they can have a better life, they won't be content with what they've got. We'll have a revolution on our hands. And you and I will be responsible for it! We'll lose our jobs and certainly be punished for breaking the Code Book."

Elinder thought for a moment and then said, "Well, I think we owe it to the robots to give them the best possible life. It's obvious we're holding them back. They deserve better, surely."

"Do they?" Tegapi asked. "Weren't they created to serve us? What right have they got to expect any more than to be serviced regularly and not scrapped too early. Why don't we just disconnect these two robots who are probably ahead of the rest, and say nothing at all to the others? Wouldn't it be best to forget the whole thing before it gets out of hand? No one will be any the wiser."

"But *we* are," said Elinder, "how can we ignore what we know? I know I can't. I just know I won't feel happy about making them do all this servant stuff, knowing they could be much more than that."

Tegapi felt that a lot of what Elinder was saying was probably right but he was not clear about what was the right thing to do.

"So what do we do?" he said after a long pause. "Obey the Code Book or continue to educate these robots?"

Chapter 2

"WHAT?" shouted Atrun, "you have discovered some robots disobeying the Code of Conduct?"

"Well not exactly disobeying it," said Elinder, "just doing more than they are supposed to do. There's no law against that, is there?"

"There most certainly is," said Atrun glaring across his desk at Tegapi and Elinder who had come to consult him. He opened the Code Book and read in his most official voice.

"'Robots. Purpose and Training.' Yes here we are. *'Robots have been developed to improve the quality of Vygot life. Early models are only capable of simple responses but later*

models have intelligence centres which allow robots to make some simple decisions for themselves such as in which order to complete their different duties.'" Atrun looked up. "There's nothing here about robots thinking for themselves. If they start to think for themselves, then they will stop thinking about how to serve us. That is obvious. What you are suggesting is well outside of the Code Book and is illegal."

"But don't you see?" said Elinder, "the more like us they become the better it will be for all of us. We can work together as partners, not masters and slaves."

"*They* won't like that," said Atrun, lowering his voice.

"Who won't?" asked Tegapi.

"Members of the Council, who do you think?" said Atrun. "They have so many robots working for them they have to do nothing for themselves. No no, they'd never allow robots to get ideas above themselves. That would never do. My advice to you is forget it. That is what I am going to do. As far as I am concerned this conversation never took place."

"How can you say that?" demanded Elinder angrily.

"Say what?" said Atrun, "my mind has gone strangely blank. Now what was it you came to see me about?"

Elinder turned and marched towards the door, dragging Tegapi after her.

For a while they travelled back towards their home bays in silence. Then Tegapi said, "I think Atrun is probably right. I did tell you, this whole thing will cause trouble. We do have a duty to our fellow Vygots, you know. They trust us to do the best we can with these robots. If we go beyond that, we'll be letting them down."

"And what about letting the robots down?" said Elinder. "That's what I'm more concerned about. Vygots have a good life. We're not threatening that. New robot machines could be made which don't have the brains of the present ones."

"But that all costs money and it does put us in a bad light. What will people think of us?"

"Can you stop thinking about yourself for just a minute?" demanded Elinder. "Because if you can't I don't really want anything more to do with you as a friend." And she turned and left without a further word.

For nearly two weeks, Tegapi and Elinder barely spoke to each other except in the course of their work. Neither of them talked about what they had seen at the rock or the future of the robots. Tegapi knew Elinder well. He admired her strong ideas but things were not always as black and white as she made them out to be. Suppose they did allow the robots to develop their full potential, what would happen to their society on

Zeptron? Things had gone on in the way they were now for centuries. Why change?

Tegapi told himself that Atrun was probably right. The Code Book was there to keep things in balance, so that life could be kept as it was. That was surely what the Vygots wanted. They wouldn't want a bunch of super-educated robots pointing out that they couldn't possibly work that day because they had to play in a music concert! He smiled at his own joke. But could it happen? Once the robots got started on this self education who could know where it might end? Could the robots even take over from the Vygots eventually? Tegapi began to turn pale at the thought of robots fighting against Vygots. But why would they do this if it was the Vygots who had set them free? Tegapi shook his head. Who could say what might happen?

As Tegapi was lost in this deep train of thought he failed to notice someone approach and stand by his side. It was Elinder.

"Hello," she said, guardedly.

"Hello," Tegapi replied, not quite knowing what else to say.

"You look lost in thought."

"Yes, I was trying to look into the future and work out the consequences of what might happen if you get your way with these robots."

"Come with me," she said, "I've got something to show you." With a certain amount of nervousness, Tegapi followed Elinder to her work area, where she normally trained her own group of robots. Once inside the room, Elinder shut and locked the door. Ten robots were standing frozen to attention awaiting their next command.

Tegapi turned to Elinder in relief.

"I must say I'm relieved that you decided to do the sensible thing and forget all this robot development stuff," he said. "I'm sure it is for the best, you know."

"Well," said Elinder, "I did think about it for a long while before I finally made up my mind. I did actually persuade myself that you and Atrun were right on balance. It isn't always easy to know what to do, when things pull you in different directions. I thought I had made up my mind but the next day I knew I could not turn back. I have to go on to see just what these robots can do. As their teacher, I think it's my duty."

Suddenly, there was a sound like gunfire in the room as the robots burst into applause at Elinder's words, clanking their metal grippers together in approval.

Tegapi gasped. The robots had understood what they had been saying!

"But that's incredible," said Tegapi, amazed. "You've only had them for a

short time."

"Oh yes, but the difference is that instead of holding them back by doing the things *Vygots* want them to do, the robots and I have actually been thinking and talking together. And, I can tell you, it is amazing how quickly they learn, when they are interested. We've never allowed them to show what they are capable of."

Tegapi had to admit that the robots were holding themselves in a way he had never seen before. They were alert and straining forward to pick up every word, eager to respond.

"Can they talk?" he asked.

"It's coming," said Elinder, "it's all about learning to control and vary the signal output. I think they are talking quite a lot with each other. And they are learning our language too, though that is taking a little more time. It will come, certainly. Next two or three weeks, I would say, which would take them to the end of their training course."

"Things are moving too fast," said Tegapi to himself. "Is it too late to turn back?" Suddenly he turned on Elinder, angrily.

"Why have you told me all this?" he demanded. "You know I had doubts about this experiment."

"Because I needed someone to talk to and I want your help. You were bound to find out sooner or later and I would rather tell you myself than have you find out accidentally."

"That was hardly fair on me," said Tegapi. "It puts me in a very difficult position. What am I supposed to do now?"

"What you think is right, I suppose," Elinder replied. "I had hoped that we could work on this project together. I am sure that once the robots have perfected the language we can call a public meeting at which we can show the people just what they are capable of. I'm convinced that most people won't want to condemn them back to a life of slavery. That way the Council will have to listen."

"Slavery?" queried Tegapi. "Isn't that a bit strong?"

"I don't think so," she said, "isn't that what it amounts to when one group keeps another group down for its own benefit? And, to be honest, I don't think I want to belong to that kind of society."

"But we own these things," Tegapi protested. "We created them. Doesn't that mean we're completely free to do what we want with them?" Tegapi looked at the robots who were slowly shaking their heads from side to side.

"But how can you be sure the people will back you?" Tegapi went on. "Supposing most Vygots don't want change and vote against you? Are you prepared to abide by what they

want? Because if they don't back you..."

"That's why we need to plan things carefully," Elinder replied. The robots clapped their hands and hugged each other, making weird little high pitched sounds very excitedly.

Chapter 3

For the next two weeks Elinder went into overdrive with her group of robots. Her only course of action was to work in secret with them, although she was aware this was unfair on the other robots who were not getting the same attention. But what else could she do? If the plan came off, they would all benefit in the long run.

Elinder knew her plan was risky. As it was, Atrun seemed to be getting more and more suspicious as each day went by.

About a week before the normal training was due to end, Atrun came over to where Tegapi was reading a training manual.

"I'm glad that silly business with Elinder and the robots came to nothing, Tegapi" he said. "I can't imagine what would have happened if she had gone ahead with actually educating those things."

"Hmmm" said Tegapi, pretending to be reading. He didn't want Atrun asking too many questions.

"I mean, I know Elinder is a good trainer," Atrun went on, "but I have noticed that she has been spending a lot of time in her work area, with this present bunch. There's nothing wrong, I hope?"

"Wrong?" said Tegapi. "What could be wrong?"

"You tell me," said Atrun. "I mean why should any trainer have to work all night?"

"What do you mean?"

"The other night, I was disturbed by a noise and looked out across the base and noticed that Elinder's work area light was still on. And she's taken to locking her room whilst she is teaching. It does make one wonder, doesn't it?"

"Wonder?" repeated Tegapi, trying to sound calm. "I'll have a word with her about it, if you like."

"Yes, I should, if I were you, Tegapi," Atrun said slowly, looking straight at him. "It wouldn't do if the balance of things were upset, would it? *They* wouldn't like it, would they?" And he nodded in the direction of the Council building.

Tegapi shuddered. "I'm sure there's nothing at all to worry about. Leave Elinder to me. She's probably just overworking as usual. You know what a good teacher she is."

"Quite," said Atrun deliberately and turned to leave.

Tegapi didn't like this at all. He was beginning to sense real danger.

He approached Elinder's classroom and knocked quietly on the door. The noise inside the room suddenly stopped. After a second or two, Elinder called out,

"Who is it?"

"It's me, Tegapi. I need to talk to you."

"Can't it wait until tonight?"

"No it can't. Will you let me in."

"Just a minute," called Elinder. There was more scrambling about and in a short while the door edged open. Tegapi pushed himself through the narrow crack of the door.

"What's going on?" said Elinder, locking the door behind him. "Why are you looking so agitated?"

"It's Atrun," said Tegapi, "I'm sure he suspects. He came to me just now asking all sorts of pointed questions and dropping hints – without admitting he knows anything of course. He would never do that."

"Do you think he has reported us to the Council?" asked Elinder.

"Probably not," Tegapi replied. "I suspect Atrun will try not to get involved on either side if he can help it. If he reported on you – on us – he might be asked some very awkward questions about how long he has known about our experiment."

"*Our* experiment?" asked Elinder. "Did I hear you correctly?"

"I guess so," replied Tegapi, "I do think you were right to go on with the experiment, though I don't find it easy to say I was wrong." He studied the floor for a second or two. "Anyway," he went on, "the training course comes to and end this week and we shall have to show our hand."

"No, that's too soon," said Elinder, "we won't be ready in time."

"But I thought you said they were learning incredibly quickly. How much time do you want?"

"Just two or three extra days, Tegapi, please. You're in charge of the training programme."

"No, no, it's impossible," said Tegapi, "it's too risky. Atrun would know for sure there was something going on if I extended the course. I've **never** had to do that."

"You must, please," Elinder begged.

"Look, Atrun suspects you. He has already noticed that you have been working through the night here."

"What?" said Elinder in alarm.

Tegapi repeated what Atrun had told him. Elinder looked around the classroom and cursed as she realised she had overlooked a small blind in the top corner of the classroom. What a stupid thing to do!

"What do we do now?" she said. Tegapi thought Elinder was talking to him but she had turned to the robots, who by now were clustering around her. In the front was one of the robots Tegapi had seen at the rock.

"The thing is," said the robot, leaning forward, "we need the three more days to prepare the space pod. If we are discovered before then, we shall not be able to escape if things go wrong."

Tegapi was so amazed by what the robot said that he scarcely registered the fact that he had never before heard a robot so much as utter a single Vygot word.

"Escape? Space pod?" he queried unbelievingly. "What are you talking about?"

Elinder answered for them. "The robots and I discussed the public meeting plan which I mentioned to you but we thought it sensible to have a fall back option just in case that backfired. The robots have mastered the workings of our basic space pods and have actually built a replica in secret – imagine that! That is why we have been working all night as well as all day. It is finished but not checked yet. That was why we need the extra days."

"Though actually," said another robot coming forward, "some of us feel that escape would not be right. We don't want to leave our fellow robots here. We feel we have some sort of duty to continue the struggle for our rights."

The first robot turned on its fellow. "Well, you can think that if you like," it said, "I wouldn't give much for your chances. They'll remove your intelligence and replace it with the brain of an electric kettle. I'm not going to chance it. I can't go back to the old ways, not now."

"You certainly can't, my friend" said a deep voice from the doorway. In the agitation of the discussion no one had noticed that the door had quietly opened and there stood Kapulak, the head of the Police, with armed officers on either side.

"How did you get in here?" Tegapi demanded. "You have no authority to be here under the Code Book. Please leave immediately."

"Oh but I do," said Kapulak, "since this is a matter of community security. And I don't need a lecture on the Code Book from someone like yourself who doesn't believe in loyalty or obedience. Unlike some citizens. Step forward Citizen Atrun."

Hesitating slightly, Atrun stepped out from behind Kapulak, holding Tegapi's set of master keys.

"Atrun, how could you betray us?" Elinder demanded.

"It was my duty, I'm afraid," said Atrun, "once I was convinced that you were proceeding with your plan. I did warn you against it."

"Out of cowardice, not conviction that you were right," Elinder snapped.

"That isn't entirely true," replied Atrun, "You people with your ideals about righting wrongs and so forth, can't see that sometimes you make more problems than you solve. Well. It was a choice you made. You can't say I didn't warn you. And now you will have to place yourself at the mercy of the people. You too Tegapi. I thought you at least would see reason."

Tegapi opened his mouth to reply but before he could do so, Kapulak stepped forward to arrest him and Elinder. The police officers quickly rounded up the robots who were marched off behind their Vygot friends.

Is this the end of the story? Well almost. The trial when it came was conducted in public in front of the whole community. It was an occasion which everyone talked about because trials on Zeptron were so rare. Elinder and Tegapi explained their reasons for breaking the Code of Conduct and although many Vygots sympathised with them, they had broken the rules and were found guilty. As a punishment, Tegapi was removed from his job as leader of the Training Team and he and Elinder were made to swear that in future they would stick to the Code Book. This for them was punishment enough.

And what of the robots who so nearly succeeded in changing the history of Zeptron? Well, they were sent to a servicing bay for treatment where their brain circuits were "corrected". After this they emerged as the most unthinking robots you could possibly hope to meet. In fact, they were so obedient they were immediately promoted to working for members of the Council.

And for a long, long time after that, the Vygots told stories about the days when a number of robots became so clever they almost outwitted the Vygots. But not many people believed such a thing could have happened.

And what of the other robots on the planet Zeptron? Well, I believe they never knew how close they came to being freed from their dreary lives. Or, at least, if they did, they never let on.

And so life on Zeptron returned to normal, as calm and peaceful as it had always been. The question is this, does this story end happily or sadly? Please do not ask me, I am only the teller. It is for you to decide.

Confusion for Claire

Key ideas

- possible differences in expectations, standards and rules between home and school

This story highlights the confusion that often exists in children's minds when teachers and parents exhibit or encourage different standards of behaviour. These differences can be significant and can be usefully explored. In the story, Claire finds that her teacher is less concerned with truth telling in some circumstances than her mother would be. For many children, this duality of standards may apply to moral issues such as honesty and respect for property, and may also include issues such as language, dress, respect for the elderly and so on. Why do these differences exist? Why is school different from home? Who is right?

Below are some of the issues you could explore arising from this story. Remember to ask the children if they would like to raise any issues of their own for discussion.

Moral reasoning

- Is Claire right to complain about the way Mrs McIntee behaved? Why?
- Mrs McIntee seems to have made up some rules for her own classroom. Would it be better if all teachers had the same rules? Discuss the good and bad points of this idea.
- Why are the rules at Claire's school different from those at home?
- Think of the main rules there are in your own home and make a list of them. Then say why you think the rules are there. Are there more rules at school than at home? If so, why do you think this is? (Think about rules concerning clothing, language, food, games, watching television and so on.)
- Make a class list of all the reasons you can think of why people obey rules and laws. Do you think some reasons are better than others? If so, which ones?

Thinking things through

Note: in the following suggested topics, rules could be taken to include laws, being a set of national rules imposed by Parliament and enforced by the Police and the courts.

- Do we need rules? Are rules good or bad – or can they be either? If so, think of some examples of good and bad rules.
- Where do rules come from? What happens if people don't like the rules imposed on them?
- If people often break rules, do you think this means that they believe in not having rules? (If "naughty" people believe there should be rules, how is it they often break them?)
- Most rules are about *not* doing things and these are usually backed up by some kind of punishment. Would it be possible to make up a small number of positive rules which would cover all the negative rules? Why is it harder to have rules of this kind? [Note: positive rules are often called "principles" and are more generalised and flexible than rules.]
- Most religions have clear sets of rules about the behaviour of those who belong to their faith. If there are people of different faiths in the class, share some of these rules and think about whether there is much difference in the standards of behaviour expected.
- Sometimes there are rules which are unwritten, like how to behave in certain groups. Think about what kinds of unwritten rules there are. What aspects of life do they cover?
- Invite a police officer in to talk about what it is like to have a job enforcing the laws of the country. Find out what laws are most broken by people and why. Find out what is the most difficult part of being a police officer.

Community building

- Brainstorm all the school rules you can think of. Divide them into different sets, asking the children to suggest different ways of classifying these rules.
- Discuss which rules in school are the most important and why? Which are the most broken or difficult to keep.
- Are there any aspects of school life not covered by a rule which could usefully be covered?

- What should be the purpose of punishment when rules are broken?
- Which punishments are the most effective? Why is this?

Story writing

Imagine a country where the King was so powerful that he only had to pass a law for it to be obeyed completely. Would it be a happy and peaceful place where everyone was contented and crime did not exist? Or would it be a place where the King was too powerful?

Work in twos or threes to develop a story about what could happen in such a country. You could even work on such a story as a whole class. Alternatively, you could develop ideas around this scenario through drama.

Confusion for Claire

Claire was angry. As she came indoors through the back door she flung her school bag across the floor. It went skidding on the tiles right over to where Mark, her little brother, was trying to build a castle with his wooden blocks. The castle was flattened in an instant and Mark began to cry. Albert the cat shot out of the kitchen and up the stairs to hide under a bed, as he often did.

"Claire, what are you doing?" shouted her mother, coming into the kitchen from the other room. "Why don't you look what you're doing? You could have hurt Mark doing that."

She picked Mark up and he began to cheer up as Mum gave him a drink. "There you are," Mum said to Mark. "Claire didn't mean to knock down your house, did you Claire?"

"It'th a cathle," lisped Mark.

"Come on Claire, say sorry to Marky." Claire hated it when Mum called her brother Marky. It was so babyish.

"Sorry," Claire grunted, ungraciously.

Mum put Mark down. "That's better," she said as he ran off to do something else in another part of the house. Mum sat down.

"Now, what was all that about?"

"Nothing," Claire said, staring at the floor.

"So, at least I know it's *not* about nothing, it's about something," Mum said. "What's got you so upset? Have you fallen out with someone?"

"No," Claire said. There was a pause as Mum looked into Claire's face for some sign of what was troubling her. Claire's face wore a puzzled look. She sighed.

"Look," she said, "you can't win when you're a child. At home your parents tell you to do one thing and at school the teachers tell you to do something completely different." Claire was 11 now and looking forward to leaving primary school. Mum thought that maybe this explained why Claire had seemed less happy at school lately.

"What on earth do you mean, Claire?" she asked.

"This morning, when we were doing maths, Mrs McIntee was in the cupboard and John and Joshi on our table were mucking about. Joshi stood up and threw a bit of pencil across the room. I saw him do it. But Mrs McIntee turned round and thought it was Cheryl because she was standing up. She shouted, 'Cheryl, come out here!' She doesn't like Cheryl anyway. I put my hand up and said it wasn't Cheryl, but Mrs McIntee told me to get on with my own work. I said it was Joshi who threw it and she told me not to tell tales."

"Well, the teachers often say that, I expect," said Mum.

"But it wasn't fair, and you say you should tell the truth."

"I expect Mrs McIntee has had lots of children telling her about what other children have done, just to get them into trouble," Mum said, remembering what it was like when she helped out at playgroup.

"But I was trying to get someone *out* of trouble," Claire said. "Cheryl didn't do it. She had to stay in all dinner play. Mrs McIntee didn't believe me. I wasn't telling tales. It's not fair!"

"Well, I know you wouldn't tell tales like that, Claire, but Mrs McIntee has got 30 children in the class and she doesn't know you as well as I do. Maybe she has decided that the best way to be fair is never to listen to any tales, even if they might be true."

Claire said nothing, but tapped her foot on the floor.

"It's just not the same at school as it is at home, is it?" Mum said. "Everywhere you go, the rules are different. That's just a fact of life."