

The Lord Mayor's Show – 8 November 2014



Most people have heard of the Mayor of London, the bouncy, publicity-loving, Latin-speaking Boris Johnson. But not many people know that there is another mayor of London, the Lord Mayor of the City of London – a far more ancient office.

The office of the Mayor of London has a massive geographical responsibility: the whole of London with a population of over 8 million residents. The Lord Mayor's authority on the other hand, covers less than three square kilometres (known as the Square Mile) with less than 8,000 inhabitants.

King John first introduced the office of the Lord Mayor of London in 1215 and it was one of the first elected offices in the modern world. In the thirteenth century, treachery was rife and so one of the conditions for the Lord Mayor was an annual journey to Westminster to pledge loyalty to the monarch. This journey up the Thames, to give an oath of allegiance, which has taken place every year since 1215, has now become known as the Lord Mayor's Show.

The procession has been painted by 18th century artist Canaletto, discussed by 17th century diarist Samuel Pepys and even Shakespeare mentions it. It has survived the plague, the Great Fire of London and the London Blitz. Every year, it travels from Mansion House in the middle of the City of London, along Cheapside, down Ludgate Hill (stopping at St Paul's Cathedral where the Mayor receives a blessing), along Fleet Street to the Royal Courts of Justice. Here, the Mayor alights and pledges his (or her) oath of allegiance to the monarch. Then the procession returns along the Embankment and Queen Victoria Street to Mansion House.

What makes this nearly eight-hundred-year-old procession so impressive (apart from its longevity, of course) is that it is a spectacular three miles long and it is impossible to rehearse before the event because of its location in the busy financial district of London.

For the first five hundred and fifty years or so, the Lord Mayor's Show took place on 28 October, the Feast of St Simon and St Jude. A change of date to 9 November (due to the adoption of the Gregorian calendar) lasted for the next two hundred years. These days it takes place on the second Saturday in November, which in 2014 is November 8th. It starts at 11.00am and the end of the procession returns to Mansion House around 3pm.

Not many people in the UK know the name of the current Lord Mayor of London (it's Fiona Woolf, only the second woman to hold this office) but there is a name from the past that everyone knows: Dick Whittington (and his cat ...). He served as Lord Mayor for four terms from 1397 and his story has been a well-known tale for many years (although in the story, he only serves three terms!). These days *Dick Whittington and his cat* is also a popular choice of Christmas pantomime in theatres.

So whether you want to marvel at the Lord Mayor's Show on November 8th (you can also watch it on the television, of course) or laugh at *Dick Whittington and his cat* at the theatre this Christmas, you can be sure that the Lord Mayor of London will be someone you won't confuse with the *other* mayor of London in the future.

To find out more about the Lord Mayor's Show click [here](#).
And if you would like to find out more about the real Dick Whittington, then click [here](#).

If you would like to use Dick Whittington as a topic in your lesson, we have provided you with an activity. You'll find it in the following **Teacher's notes** and on the **Worksheet**.

Teacher's notes

Dick Whittington and his cat (level A2.1 upwards, 20+ mins)

- Copy **Dick Whittington and his cat** (see Worksheet) and make sure you have one copy for Student A and one copy for Student B for each pair of students. (NB: The text is identical, but the questions are different.)
- On the board write: *Lord Mayor of London, 1215, Dick Whittington, 3 miles, 8 November*. Ask students how these items may be connected.
- Explain that the Lord Mayor of London first took office in 1215 and on 8 November there will be a three-mile procession through the City of London for the new Lord Mayor. Tell students that Dick Whittington is the most famous Lord Mayor of London and that he was born in 1358. (See pages 1/2 for more information.)
- Give each A and each B student a copy of his / her text and ask them to read it and then to answer the questions underneath.
- Help with any unknown vocabulary.

- When all students have answered the ten questions they should get into pairs, Student A and Student B.
- In pairs, Student A and Student B ask each other their questions. This practises speaking and listening.
- Check answers together in class.
- Together, ask students to retell the story of *Dick Whittington and his cat*.
- Ask students if they know any similar stories in German (or from their own country). For example: *The Musicians from Bremen* and *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*.

Key Student A:

1 No, he was an orphan. 2 To make his fortune. 3 No, on the doorstep.
4 No, he didn't receive much money. 5 Mice. 6 No, he hated her. 7 Sorry / Sad. 8 Evening. 9 No, he thought he was clever and hard-working.
10 A bag full of gold coins.

Key Student B:

1 No, it was far away. 2 No, he was disappointed. 3 The merchant.
4 At the top of the merchant's house. 5 A cat. 6 To far away countries.
7 Because he was very unhappy and lonely. 8 Because the bells told him to turn back and that he will be Lord Mayor of London. 9 One year later.
10 The merchant's daughter.

Worksheet (Student A)

Dick Whittington and his cat
(based on the true story of Richard Whittington 1358-1423)

A long time ago, there was a poor orphan boy who lived in a village in the countryside in England. He heard many stories about a far away city called London, where everyone was very rich and the streets were paved with gold. He decided to travel to London to make his fortune.

When he arrived in London he was disappointed – there were lots of big buildings, thousands of people and many horses, but everything was dirty: there was no gold on the streets. He was hungry and sad and fell asleep on the doorstep of a merchant's house.

The merchant found Dick the next morning and gave him a job as a kitchen help. The work was hard and he didn't receive much money. The cook was a mean woman and she hit him. Dick slept in a small room at the top of the house and mice ran over him when he lay in bed. Dick saved his pennies to buy a cat to kill the mice.

Dick's job was difficult. He hated the cook; he worked from morning until night and so when he went to bed he was very tired. But there were no mice and rats in his bedroom any more thanks to the cat.

One day a friend of the merchant's visited the house. 'I am going on a sea voyage to far away countries and I need a cat that can catch mice. Dick, give me your cat!' Dick gave the man his cat and he was sorry to say goodbye. The mice and rats came back to his bedroom.

Poor Dick! He was very unhappy and he was lonely without his cat. He decided to run away from the merchant's house and leave London. He walked along the streets out of London and in the evening the church bells rang and he heard this song:

*Turn again Dick Whittington
Three times Lord Mayor of London.*

So Dick returned to the merchant's house and worked even harder. The merchant saw that Dick was a clever and hard-working boy and Dick left his job in the kitchen and worked with the merchant. One year later, the friend of the merchant returned from his long sea voyage and said: 'I sold your cat for a lot of money. Here, Dick, you are now a rich man.' And he gave him a bag full of gold coins.

Dick bought his own house and married the merchant's daughter and then became the Lord Mayor of London: once, twice, three times.

Answer these questions.

- 1 Were Dick Whittington's parents alive?
- 2 Why did Dick travel to London?
- 3 On his first night in London did he sleep in a bed?
- 4 Was Dick's job in the kitchen well-paid?
- 5 What else lived in Dick's room?
- 6 Did he like the cook?
- 7 How did Dick feel when he gave the cat to the merchant's friend?
- 8 What time of day was it when he heard the bells ringing?
- 9 Did the merchant think that Dick was a lazy boy?
- 10 What did the merchant's friend give him?

Worksheet (Student B)

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(based on the true story of Richard Whittington 1358-1423)

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Answer these questions.

- 1 Was the village where Dick lived near London?
- 2 Was Dick happy when he arrived in London?
- 3 Who found Dick the next day?
- 4 Where was his bedroom?
- 5 What did Dick buy?
- 6 Where was the merchant's friend going on his voyage?
- 7 Why did Dick decide to run away?
- 8 Why did Dick return to the merchant's house?
- 9 When did the merchant's friend arrive back from his voyage?
- 10 Who did Dick marry?