

# Teaching Resources



# LOVE FROM LEXIE

## Cathy Cassidy

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for downloading these *Love from Lexie* lesson plans.

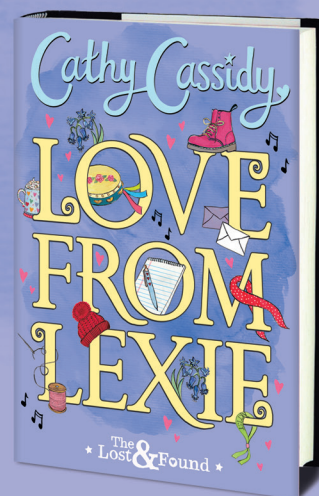
In *Love from Lexie*, Lexie's world hasn't stopped spinning since her mum vanished when she was nine years old. A new home, a new school – even a new family but Lexie never gives up hope that her mum will come back and writes her letters every day to tell her all about her new life.

There's plenty to tell – the new group of misfits she calls friends, the talent for music she never knew she had and the gorgeous boy with blue eyes and secrets to hide. But her letters remain unanswered and she's starting to feel more alone than ever.

Lexie's about to learn that sometimes you need to get lost in order to be found.

*Love from Lexie* is a brilliant story about friendship, family and belonging. It's the perfect class read.

The lesson plans in this pack offer ideas and activities that will encourage your class to think about achieving critical engagement with a text, expressing ideas in a poetic form and writing imaginatively.





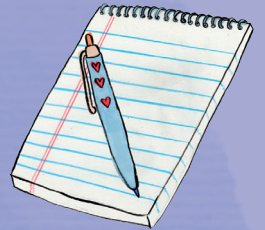
# LOVE FROM LEXIE

## LESSON 1:

Examining the opening text of *Love from Lexie*

### OBJECTIVES:

- to achieve critical engagement with a text
- to provide focused opportunities to discuss a text
- to explore the impact of switching tense in a narrative text
- to discuss and evaluate the author's use of language

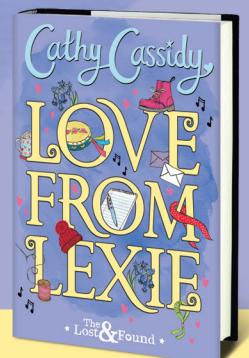


The activities in this lesson draw attention to how Cathy Cassidy, the author of the novel *Love from Lexie*, opens her story with details of a day firmly etched in Lexie's memory. This theatrical opening acts like a framed memory – a memory, it seems, that is never to be forgotten.

### STARTER ACTIVITY:

You will need a copy of Resource 1 for each pair of pupils.

- Ask pupils to work with a partner on a copy of Resource 1, considering each missing slot in the text and choosing words that would be most appropriate to complete the passage. Following their discussion, ask them to fill in their choice of words.
- Ask pupils to then compare the words they have chosen with the choice of another pair of pupils.
- Finally ask the group of four to agree on and compile a list of their most appropriate ten words.



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## RESOURCE 1



The little girl is \_\_\_\_\_ up on a second-hand sofa, snuggled in a handmade rainbow-striped jumper, her dark hair \_\_\_\_\_ with bright cotton threads, an upturned library book at her feet. She is \_\_\_\_\_, hugging a knitted toy dog and watching Frozen.

Sometimes she \_\_\_\_\_ into the kitchen to look at the clock on the wall. Sometimes she goes to the window and \_\_\_\_\_ her cheek against the glass, looking up at the clear blue sky and then down to the pavement ten floors below.

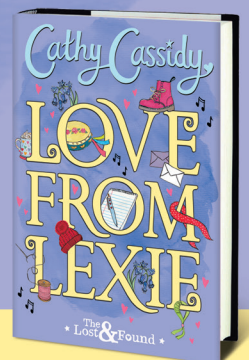
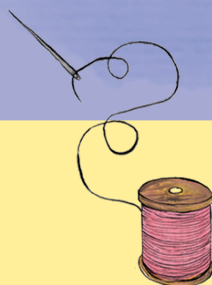
She peels back the foil from a half-eaten Easter egg and \_\_\_\_\_ it absently. When the movie finishes she goes to \_\_\_\_\_ the clock once more, then \_\_\_\_\_ to the window. The pavement glitters with broken glass and broken \_\_\_\_\_, and when her eyes blur with tears she wipes them \_\_\_\_\_ away with her sleeve.

She stays there, watching, waiting, until it gets dark.

## TASK 1

Show Resource 2 on the whiteboard and tell pupils that this is the full opening passage written by Cathy Cassidy, then read it aloud to the class.

Ask pupils to compare the author's choice of words with their own, focusing particularly on grammatical fit and achieved meaning. Ask them to be prepared to contribute to the whole class feedback session that follows. They should think about any distinctive variation between the writer's text and their own and also consider their response to the original passage as an opening to a story.



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## RESOURCE 2



The little girl is **curled** up on a second-hand sofa, snuggled in a handmade rainbow-striped jumper, her dark hair **braided** with bright cotton threads, an upturned library book at her feet. She is **alone**, hugging a knitted toy dog and watching Frozen.

Sometimes she **pads** into the kitchen to look at the clock on the wall. Sometimes she goes to the window and **presses** her cheek against the glass, looking up at the clear blue sky and then down to the pavement ten floors below.

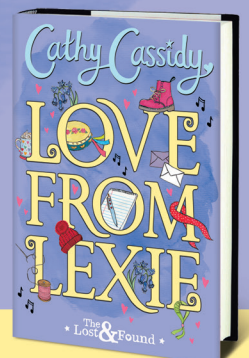
She peels back the foil from a half-eaten Easter egg and **nibbles** it absently. When the movie finishes she goes to **check** the clock once more, then **returns** to the window. The pavement glitters with broken glass and broken **dreams**, and when her eyes blur with tears she wipes them **fiercely** away with her sleeve.

She stays there, watching, waiting, until it gets dark.

## TASK 2

With the opening text still on the whiteboard, use some of the questions below (or similar) to generate a class discussion about the author's choice of language, encouraging pupils to judge how her words have matched or changed the mood and the action.

- The two first sentences suggest a cosy, comfortable scene. Which words support this image? Which phrase do you think throws some doubt on this?



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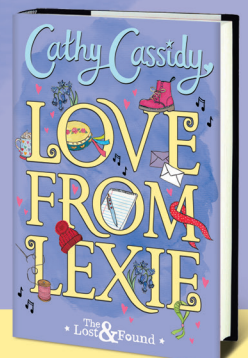
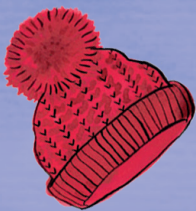


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- Writers may at times show a repeated action to draw attention to a character's feelings. Which repeated movement does the author describe here, and what do you think this tells us about how the little girl, Lexie, is feeling?

Point out that this is a good example of **Show not tell**, where a writer reveals a character's emotions without directly saying how they feel. Tell your class that that this is a useful approach for them to use in their own narrative writing.

- We are shown a scene that seems unsettled – what else gives the reader the idea that Lexie might be anxious or nervous?
- The writer tells us that Lexie is watching the Disney film *Frozen*. If you know this film, does it carry a message? Could it imply that there is a link between the main female character in the film and Lexie, our main character, or an event we might see in the novel?
- **-ing** words usually suggest ongoing action: in the passage the writer ends with the sentence, 'She stays there, watching, waiting, until it gets dark.' Why is this more effective than writing, 'She waits and watches until it is dark'?
- Do you think this passage is like the setting of a scene for a stage production? Can you say **why it seems theatrical**?



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## LESSON 2:

### Writing a Framed Memory



#### OBJECTIVES:

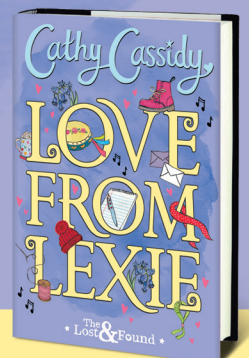
- to capture in writing a happening from the past
- to provide a writing task that engages interest
- to use writing as a tool for reflection
- to select appropriate vocabulary and grammar

#### STARTER ACTIVITY:

Ask the pupils to get into pairs, then issue a copy of Resource 3 and a red and a blue pen to each pair.

Explain that they will now look at an extract from the main story alongside the opening passage they have been studying. This extract reveals a happening before Lexie tells her whole story.

- Ask pupils to underline any verbs they recognize as **past tense** in **red** and any **present tense** verbs in **blue**.
- Ask them if the passages are written in the **first-person narrative style** or the **third-person narrative style**. They should write their answer under each column.
- Now ask the whole class for a show of hands on the narrative style of each passage to gain a majority decision.
- Guiding the class to a recognition that the writer, Cathy Cassidy, was **marking out** the opening passage, wanting to make it **distinctive**, ask pupils if they think that the difference in narrative style helps this.



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## RESOURCE 3

*Sometimes she pads into the kitchen to look at the clock on the wall. Sometimes she goes to the window and presses her cheek against the glass, looking up at the clear blue sky and then down to the pavement ten floors below.*

*She peels back the foil from a half-eaten Easter egg and nibbles it absently. When the movie finishes she goes to check the clock once more, then returns to the window.*



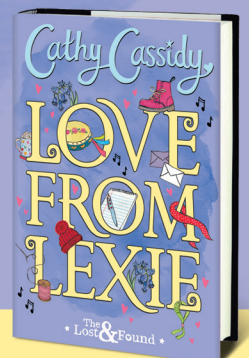
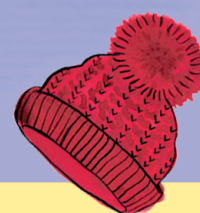
*I was nine years old when it happened, and I wish I could say I'd seen it coming, but I really didn't . . . I didn't have a clue. For starters, we didn't live a regular kind of life. We moved around a lot.*

*For a while we lived in a flat in Edinburgh, then a farmhouse in the Scottish borders, a cottage by the sea, and once, for a whole summer, in a bell tent.*

*We ended up in a high-rise block of flats on a Midlands estate, which was probably the worst place of all . . . but we were happy. Well, I thought we were.*

## TASK

Having examined, in their last lesson, the long-ago memory that still haunts Lexie, pupils will now work on a framed memory of their own. Pupils should work individually. They will each need a thesaurus.



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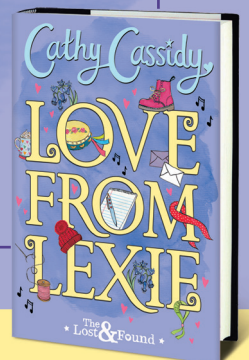


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- Reassure pupils that the memory does not have to be sad or life-changing: it can be a happy memory or a funny memory or a dramatic memory – or, of course, it can be a sad memory if they feel like writing about it.
- Like Cathy Cassidy, in just 150 words, they should try to capture the events, the feelings, the mood of that day.
- Remind them of the power of Show not tell in their writing.
- Emphasize that because they are limited to only 150 words, they need to select each one carefully.
- Pupils need to write succinctly. Explain that this means writing very concisely, condensing all the feelings, the happenings, the atmosphere, the colours of that day into just 150 words. This piece of writing will definitely need some planning and redrafting.

## RESOURCE 4:

Drafting your framed memory



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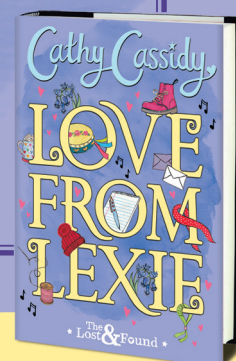


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Some teachers may wish to **introduce modelling on the board** to aid the process of writing succinctly. You may choose to display a pupil's work in progress on the whiteboard and discuss word choices, adding and taking away and moving parts around.

## Resource 5:

Final framed memory for display



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## LESSON 3:

### Lost & Found



#### OBJECTIVES:

- to experiment with language
- to express ideas in poetic form
- to consider a specific theme running through the novel
- to consider personal responses to the novel

#### STARTER ACTIVITY:

Ask pupils to work with a partner to match the split headlines (Resource 6), all related to the themes of 'Lost and Found'/'Found and Lost' that runs through the novel Love from Lexie. Invite some pairs to share their matched headlines. Do any pairs have different results?

These are the correctly matched headlines:

LOST FAMOUS PAINTING FOUND IN BANK VAULT

LOTTERY COUPLE WIN AND LOSE MILLIONS

£5 NOTE 'WORTH £50,000' FOUND IN CHRISTMAS CARD

BOY CAUGHT WITH BOXES OF BRAND-NEW LEGO WITHIN HALF AN HOUR OF STEALING IT

LOST KITTEN FOUND IN DUFFEL BAG

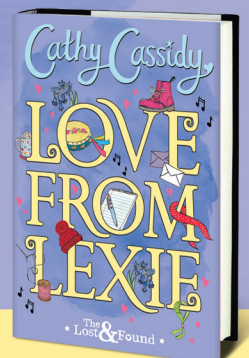
SHOE LOST IN FROST AND FOUND

ARE YOU MISSING TERRIBLY A HORSE AND PONY?

REWARD OFFERED FOR DECKING STOLEN FROM BACK GARDEN

DREAM DRESS RECYCLED BY MISTAKE

ANCIENT 'MUMMY' UNEARTHED FROM 'LOST MEDIEVAL CIVILIZATION' NEAR ARCTIC



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## RESOURCE 6:

Split headlines



BOY CAUGHT WITH BOXES OF  
BRAND-NEW LEGO

LOST FAMOUS PAINTING

DREAM DRESS

ANCIENT 'MUMMY' UNEARTHED

LOST KITTEN FOUND

REWARD OFFERED FOR

£5 NOTE 'WORTH £50,000' FOUND

LOTTERY COUPLE WIN

SHOE LOST IN FROST

ARE YOU MISSING TERRIBLY

IN CHRISTMAS CARD

A HORSE AND PONY?

WITHIN HALF AN HOUR OF STEALING IT

IN DUFFEL BAG

DECKING STOLEN FROM BACK GARDEN

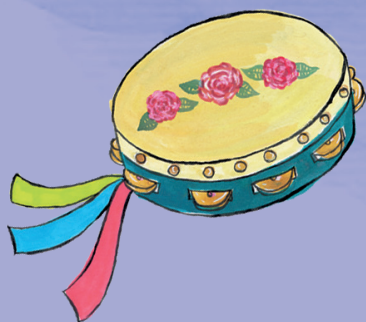
FROM 'LOST MEDIEVAL CIVILIZATION'  
NEAR ARCTIC

AND FOUND

RECYCLED BY MISTAKE

FOUND IN BANK VAULT

AND LOSE MILLIONS



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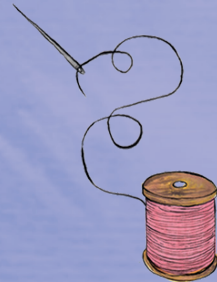
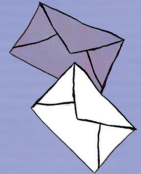


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## TASK 1

Remind pupils how clever Lexie is at writing poems and how she develops this skill into writing song lyrics. Tell them that it is their turn to show their poetic skill by taking one of the news headlines and creating an acrostic poem. They should choose one of these sets of starting letters:

<b>F</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>L</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>D</b>		<b>A</b>
		<b>N</b>
		<b>D</b>
		<b>F</b>
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		<b>U</b>
		<b>N</b>
		<b>D</b>



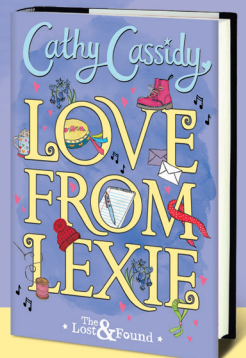
### Two examples to get you thinking:

#### DREAM DRESS RECYCLED BY MISTAKE

**F**rilly and floating  
**O**utrageously gorgeous  
**U**ntidily thrown in a heap  
**N**ow scooped up with rubbish and  
**D**ead in a tangle of trash.

#### BOY CAUGHT WITH BOXES OF BRAND-NEW LEGO WITHIN HALF AN HOUR OF STEALING IT

**L**ego castles and rockets and monsters  
**O**utlandishly stopped by a theft.  
**S**mall folk become tearful and sad  
**T**ill a greedy boy meets the police.





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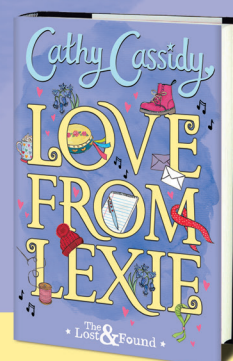
## TASK 2:

The theme of 'Lost and Found' runs through Cathy Cassidy's novel. Ask pupils to look at the chart (Resource 7), recording some of the elements that underline this theme. Pupils working with a partner can add to the chart if they feel any important things are missing.

Reading this chart should prompt a memory of much that happens in the novel.

## RESOURCE 7:

Lost	Found	Lost and Found	Found and Lost
Lexie's mum	A patchwork quilt	A tortoise – Mary Shelley	A meeting room
Culture, being starved by endless cuts	Old Ordnance Survey maps	Lexie's grandparents	A boyfriend – Marley Hayes
Letters sent to Lexie's mum	A tambourine		
Lexie's hurt 'gradually seeps out'	Lasting friendships		
Home country – Syria	Foster sister Bex Murray		
	A match between music and lyrics – 'I found the words'		
	The Lost & Found band		
	A safe place for refugee Sami		



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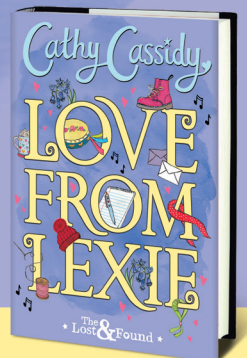
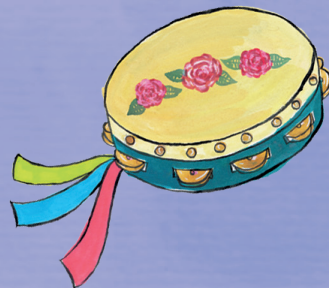
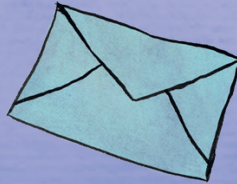


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## TASK 3:

Ask pupils to work with a partner and consider the following three questions. They should be prepared to offer their responses and reasoned justifications for their views in a final class discussion.

1. If you could change one thing about this book, what would it be?
2. In what way does the book relate to your life?
3. What message, if any, do you take from this book?



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## LESSON 4:

### Writing Letters to the Band

#### OBJECTIVES:

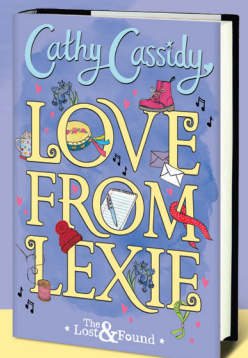
- to work collaboratively with team members
- to address a character as if real
- to add detail to an original text
- to write imaginatively, focusing on the creative use of language



1. Bex Bass guitar	2. Marley Lead guitar	3. Sami Flute	4. Happi Violin	
5. Drums Dylan	6. Cello George	7. Trumpet Lee	8. Violin Romy	9. Keyboard Soumia
10. Vocals Sash	11. Manager/Photographer Jake			

Using these names on the whiteboard, introduce the band members of Lost & Found. (Point out that Lexie herself is not included because this lesson deals with characters who are not fleshed out to the same extent as Lexie, who is of course writing as first-person narrator.)

For the tasks that follow split the class into six or seven working groups. Each group is to be given the name of one of the band members listed above – or each team could pick the name or number of a band member out of a box.



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## STARTER ACTIVITY:



Tell the groups that their task will be to write a three-paragraph **celebratory** letter to their band member. As they **praise**, encourage the groups to **respond warmly** and **supportively** to their character and his/her involvement with the band. They can choose, if they wish, to fill in gaps not offered in the text, so there is an opportunity to use the imagination by referring to additional aspects of the character's life.

Lexie recognizes that all the band members are '*lost in their own particular way*'. Tell the pupils that these letters should therefore boost confidence by recognizing their band member's talent or determination or by referring to positive traits like kindness.

Tell teams that they have 15 minutes to research their given band member, making a list of any key character traits they spot (or remember). Each group could share out different parts of the novel in order to save time.

## TASK 1:

Explain to the teams that they must decide who the letter writer is – who are they writing as?

Offer them the characters listed below – but they may have an alternative person in mind.

parent/guardian/brother/sister

another member of the band

a social worker

Miss Walker

a teacher

a neighbour

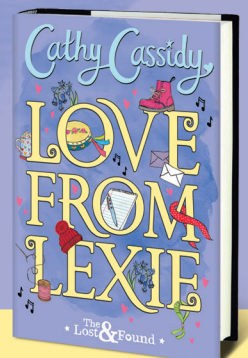
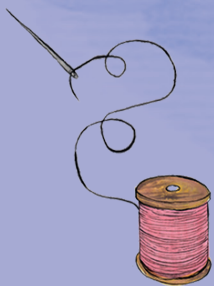
a friend

an admirer

Louisa Winter

Ked Wilder

a talent scout



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## TASK 2:

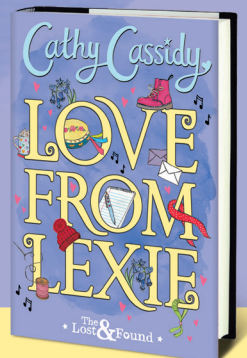
Give a copy of Resource 8 to each team, but urge pupils to discuss ideas before mapping out the content/detail of their three paragraphs here.

## RESOURCE 8:

### Points for success

- Craft your opening sentence carefully to capture the attention of your reader.
- Use the personal pronoun 'I' as you write in role.
- Remember that this is an informal letter rather than a formal one.
- Use a variety of sentence types.
- Make full use of a dictionary and thesaurus.
- Try to include something surprising.
- Use of humour could be effective.

Finally hand out Resource 9 so that teams can write the final version of their letter.



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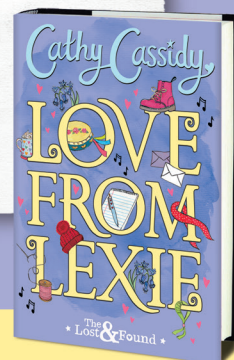


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RESOURCE 9:



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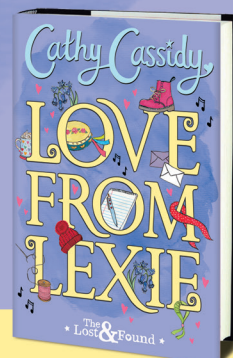
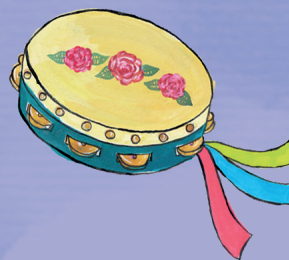
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## OPTIONAL FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Each group could practise reading out their letter, preparing to present it to the whole class. Open by introducing the band member it is addressed to and the character writing it.
- Some pupils could put up a still band photo at the front of the class. The letters would then be delivered to pupils playing the band members, who read their letter out loud.
- The letters could form part of a class display, along with the acrostic poems and framed memories.



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