

Plot, character and setting

SECTION

4

Plotlines

Objective: To understand how writers use different structures to create coherence and impact.

What you need: Copies of *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*, flipchart or board, photocopiable page 15.

Cross-curricular link: PSHE.

What to do

- Focus on the last chapters of the story and ask the children what they feel about the ending. Ask: *Is it a happy ending, and if so, why?* (Bradley enjoys himself at the party and has made real friends.) Suggest that the story is typical of its genre (Realistic stories/Stories that raise issues) in that a main character faces difficult issues that have to be resolved.
- In pairs, challenge the children to refer to the story and make notes on the problems that Bradley faces and how they are resolved. (He is lagging a year behind his peers; he never does

his homework; he fails tests; he has no real friends. He overcomes these issues with the help of Carla and Jeff; Carla gives him a *magic book* and encourages him to believe that he has good inside himself.)

- Hand out individual copies of photocopiable page 15 and ask the children to fill it in, then cut out the boxes and paste them in the correct order following the plot of the story.
- Ensure the children have sequenced the features correctly and map them into a plotline on the board.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Challenge the children to extend the plotline by adding more significant features from the novel.

For younger/less confident learners: Provide page references to help the children locate the information they need from the text.

Time and pace

Objective: To understand how writers use different structures to create coherence and impact.

What you need: Copies of *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*, flipchart or board.

Cross-curricular link: History.

What to do

- Ask the children how much time they imagine passes during the course of the story. (Days, months, weeks, years?) Talk about pace. Can they suggest any events that happen quickly? (The fight between Melinda and Bradley.) Can they suggest events that happen slowly? (Bradley begins to believe in himself.)
- Read Chapter 3 together. Ask: *What happens during the day?* (Bradley gets home from school, plays with his animals, lies about the meeting with his teacher.)
- Within Chapter 3, challenge the children to identify events that occurred in the past.

(Bradley's parents brought back the donkey figurine from a holiday; he spilled juice on the bed; Claudia broke Ronnie's ear; his dad got shot by a robber.) List suggestions on the board.

- Can the class suggest which events may have been going on for months or even years? (Bradley telling lies; playing with his animal friends.) Discuss how the author weaves present and past events to build a picture of Bradley's life.
- Invite the children to choose an event in Chapter 3 from Bradley's past and write a short paragraph describing what happened.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Ask the children to write a paragraph describing another event from Bradley's past, chosen from anywhere in the novel.

For younger/less confident learners: Let the children work with a writing partner to plan and describe another event from Bradley's past that is referred to in Chapter 3.