

# Talk about it

SECTION

5

## Too excited to sleep

**Objective:** To use and recognise the impact of theatrical effects in drama.

**What you need:** Copies of *The Worst Witch*, photocopiable page 22, an enlarged copy of Extract 1.

**Cross-curricular link:** Drama.

### What to do

- Hand out copies of photocopiable page 22. Explain that this is an incomplete playscript. Ask the children to find Maud and Mildred's dialogue in Chapter One. Ask: *How does the script layout differ from the layout in the book? What is the significance of italics and brackets?*
- Ask the class to think about who will say what next, with reference to the original text.
- Highlight the direct speech in Extract 1, using different colours for different characters. Point out how tag words and description outside of the speech marks are not words spoken by characters. The surrounding narrative can be useful for stage

directions in brackets. For example: (*Mildred chews her plait, nervously*).

- Tell the children, working in small groups, to complete the script of the scene.
- When their scripts are complete, invite the children to choose a role each. Ask them, initially, to practise doing a simple script-reading, as if for radio, concentrating on variation of tone, volume and pace.
- Later, invite the children to act out the scene using facial expression and gesture.

### Differentiation

**For older/more confident learners:** Challenge the children to add sound effects (approaching footsteps, creaking door, owl hooting). Encourage them to learn their lines off by heart.

**For younger/less confident learners:** Help the children word-process their scripts, and print out three copies with roles colour-coded for easy identification.

## Poetry and prose

**Objective:** To compare how a common theme is presented in poetry and prose.

**What you need:** Copies of *The Worst Witch*, handwritten copies of the school song from Chapter Two.

### What to do

- When the children have read at least the first four chapters, read in chorus the Witches' Academy school song from Chapter Two.
- Quote the narrator's observation: *...usual type of school song, full of pride, joy and striving*. Invite the children to identify evidence of these three aspects.
- Discuss the purpose of a school song (to inspire, motivate, evoke loyalty).
- Ask groups of children to discuss and make notes on how the teachers' expectations reflect the words of the song and how far the pupils live

up to its sentiments. (Encourage them to look closely at Mildred and Ethel, Miss Hardbroom and Miss Cackle.)

- Invite each group to present their findings, with evidence from the text. Discuss why Academy life falls short of the song's aspirations. Ask: *Why does poetry lend itself better to the song, and prose to the story?*

### Differentiation

**For older/more confident learners:** When the children are further through the book, return to this discussion about the teachers' expectations and how far the children live up to them. Talk about whether the children have altered their inferences and opinions about the teachers and pupils.

**For younger/less confident learners:** Ask: *How did the pupils sing the song? (They were droning.) What does this suggest?* Children can find examples of events that do and don't fulfil the song's aspirations.