

Talk about it

SECTION

5

Finding out about Jan

Objective: To use and explore a variety of questions to understand a character better.

What you need: Copies of *The Silver Sword*, photocopiable page 22.

Cross-curricular link: History.

What to do

- This activity should be done when the children have read the whole book.
- Talk about what a complex character Jan is with the children for a few minutes. Do they like or dislike Jan and why? Ask: *Is there anything that puzzles you about Jan? Are there any questions about him that weren't answered in the story?*
- Encourage them to suggest what they would like to ask Jan if they met him. Invite volunteers to take turns to sit in the hot seat in the role of Jan.
- Cut out the question starter cards on

photocopiable page 22 and share them among the other children.

- Invite them to ask Jan a question beginning with one of the question starters. Encourage 'Jan' to answer based on their knowledge of him from the story but also to use their imagination to add their own ideas about Jan, his motives and background.
- When they have finished, invite them to say whether, and how, the hot seat activity helped them to understand Jan better.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Ask them to generate their own questions to pose to Jan.

For younger/less confident learners: Let the children read the question cards and work out suitable questions together before running the activity.

Freeze-frame

Objective: To use drama strategies and conventions to explore themes in the text.

What you need: Copies of *The Silver Sword*, writing materials.

Cross-curricular link: History.

What to do

- This activity can be run at any point in the story.
- Explain that the children are going to 'pause the story', as if they were pausing a film, and create a freeze-frame moment.
- Choose a moment from the story that reflects one of its themes in order to demonstrate how this is done. (For example: when Edek is caught smuggling and is taken away – separation; when the farmer discovers them hiding in his barn – courage or survival.) Discuss what each character might be thinking and hoping for at this moment.
- Organise the children into small groups of

different numbers of children so they will be able to choose different scenes from across the book.

- Ask the children to look through the book and choose a scene from the story that suits the number of children in their group. Ask them to allocate characters to each child in the group and, using a sheet of paper and a pen, collaborate to work out how the scene might look.
- Invite each group to show their chosen scene as a freeze-frame, group by group. Encourage each child in the scene to describe what they are thinking and hoping for at that moment and say what they will do next.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Ask them to write a description of their group's scene.

For younger/less confident learners: Encourage the children to draw a picture of their group's freeze-frame moment.

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