

Get writing

SECTION

6

Diary writing

Objective: To use different genres as models for writing – for example, short extracts, sequels, additional episodes, alternative endings – using appropriate conventions and language.

What you need: Photocopiable page 30, writing materials.

What to do

- Read the extracts on photocopiable page 30 to the children. Tell them that both are examples of fictional diaries. One is from the diary of a boy aged 13 $\frac{3}{4}$. The other is the diary of a girl who is also about the same age as Laura.
- Discuss the styles used. Which is humorous, and which is serious? Were they set recently or in the past? Discuss the use of language and the style of writing in both extracts. How do they differ, if at all, from Laura's diary? For example, they should notice Adrian's conversational style and his use of short sentences.

- Ask the children to work with a partner. For each extract, they should write entries for the day before and the day after. Each child in the pair should write two extracts, one for each diary.
- Next, ask the children to discuss their entries with their partner, to see if they agree with what the other has done, and if there is anything they think could be changed or improved. Ask some of the pairs to read their entries out, and discuss their effectiveness as a class.

Differentiation

For older/more able children: Extend the activity by asking the children to write an extract from Pandora's diary. What kind of person is she? What would her writing style be like? What might she say about not wanting to go out with Adrian anymore? And about Craig Thomas!

For younger/less able children: Restrict the activity to one diary style. Structure the activity by discussing what might have happened the day before and the day after the given diary entry.

Writing a review

Objective: To write a brief helpful review tailored for real audiences.

What you need: Examples of reviews of children's books, flipchart or board.

What to do

- Explain to the children that they are going to write a review of *The Wreck of the Zanzibar* for a school magazine.
- Read some reviews of children's books to the class.
- Put three headings up on the flipchart or board: Synopsis; Structure and style; Reader appeal. Ask the children what they think a book review should include and write their ideas under the headings. (A short synopsis of the story outlining the plot, the characters and the setting; some comments on the narrative structure – the diary form and use of two voices to tell the story;

the style of writing – use of language, creation of atmosphere; whether it appeals to boys and girls; whether it retains the reader's interest.)

- Ask the children to write a short review, either by hand or on a computer.
- Invite groups to share their reviews with the rest of the class. Discuss what the class liked about each review.
- Display the reviews in the classroom.

Differentiation

For older/more able children: Ask the children to create a back cover for the latest edition of the book. They should write a blurb, with illustrations, that will make people want to read it.

For younger/less able children: Structure the review for the children, giving them headings to help them organise their information. (For example, 'Book details', 'Plot summary', 'What's good about the book', 'What's not good about the book'.)