

Shared reading

SECTION

3

Extract 1

- Read the extract together and invite suggestions about the themes it introduces, such as friendship and politeness.
- Explore what causes the relationship between Babe and Ma to develop so quickly. (Babe's civility and friendliness.) Ask the children to circle the words that refer to this ('politely', 'nice name', 'civil', 'kind word').
- Ask the children to underline any unfamiliar vocabulary and see if they can work out the meaning from the context; '*maa-ing*' for example, is invented: do the children think it funny/effective? What does 'tipped a drench'

mean? How could a throat be said to 'protest'?

- Ask the children why they think Babe doesn't tell Fly about his conversation with Ma. (He suspects that Fly doesn't think very highly of the sheep; she thinks they are stupid, and so wouldn't approve of him befriending one of them.)
- Ask the children to find the short word repeated three times halfway through the extract ('all'). Discuss the effect of this repetition in heightening the effect of the dream. Do the children think the phrase 'hatred gleaming in their mad yellow eyes' suggests a dream or a nightmare? Can they imagine it?

Extract 2

- Ask the children to read the extract with you. Do they recognise which part of the book it comes from? (The beginning.) Do they find the use of a direct question for the opening sentence effective? Why?
- Ask the children to find the apostrophes in Mrs Hogget's first speech, and identify why they are used. (For omission/contraction.)
- Focus on the description of Mrs Hogget's face. The use of 'comfortable' is an unusual choice, but effective in giving us an impression of her.
- Point out the repetition and alliteration in Mrs Hogget's second sentence ('What a racket, what a row') and note the emphatic effect this has.

- Ask the children to circle examples of dialect or speech that is individual to Mrs Hogget. Her style of speech and the way it is presented, with no full stops, helps with her characterisation.
- Challenge the children to estimate how many words Hogget uses in his four sentences (nine in total). Note that this helps with *his* characterisation and contrasts with his wife, making them an interesting couple.
- Point out the short sentence followed by a much longer one in the second paragraph. Discuss the rhythm and interest created and ask the children to consider how they could use this style in their own writing.

Extract 3

- Read the extract together and encourage the children to identify the point in the story. (Hogget intends to kill Babe.) What action has preceded this? (Ma's death, which Hogget thinks Babe was responsible for.)
- Notice how the author changes the mood as events change. At the beginning there is a dark interior and a black gun. Near the end of the extract there is sunlight. Hogget's voice at the beginning is 'cold' and at the end it is 'warm and

kindly'. Why has it changed?

- Discuss the black humour in 'some quite unexpected surprise would come out of its two small round mouths'. (Make sure the children understand this refers to Babe's trusting nature and the fact that pigs like to eat.)
- Ask the children to find and explain the evidence Hogget has that Babe has been a hero. (The hairs around Babe's mouth are the same colour as the sheep-worrying dogs.)

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