

Get writing

SECTION

6

Way in to magic

Objective: To plan a story, identifying the stages of its telling.

What you need: Paper and pens, various objects, for example: key, clothes peg, spoon, walking stick.

What to do

- Re-read Chapter 3 together. Prompt the children towards thinking about the old man and how he transforms James's life by giving him the magical things. Talk through the events that follow. Note what James was meant to do, what actually happened and the later explanation from the creatures concerning the magical things.
- Invite the children to look at your collection of objects and to think of the ways in which these could be used in a story to transform someone's life.
- Let each child choose an object and a character, of their creation, who could be given it, and then to plan the 'before' and 'after' for their

character's encounter with it. These are crucial stages in magical stories (look at 'Cinderella', for instance).

- Ask the children to fold a piece of paper in half and to make notes about what life was like before the magic on one half, and after on the other.
- Next, tell the children to decide how the magic object makes its way into the life of their character to transform his or her life. Let them write this part of the story.
- Encourage the children to complete their narrative in stages, using more than one writing session, if necessary.

Differentiation

For older/more able children: Say that the magic item can be used more than once, to enable the children to extend their narrative.

For younger/less able children: Ask the children to make notes for their narrative, focusing on one element of their story.

Character profiles

Objective: To write portraits of characters.

What you need: Photocopiable page 28, pens, drawing materials and computers (optional).

Cross-curricular links: ICT, Art and Design.

What to do

- Talk through the ways in which characters are presented in stories, following the three headings on the photocopiable sheet. Ask the children if they can think of examples from the book to show how characters are portrayed through their appearance, actions and speech. Explain that 'speech' does not just need to include verbatim quotes. It can also include the types of things a character said or the manner in which they spoke.
- Hand out the photocopiable sheet and ask the children to look at the character profiles from *James and the Giant Peach*. Point out that there

is a mix of character roles: a hero, a helper and a villain.

- Ask the children to fill in the photocopiable sheet, devising three characters of their own and thinking about how their speech, actions and appearance could be used to show their personality. Ask them to try to be as original as possible in their ideas.
- Challenge the children to write up their character portraits from their notes. Let the children use computers to complete their work, if appropriate. Children could also draw pictures of their characters.

Differentiation

For older/more able children: Ask the children to use these characters to write a magical story scene.

For younger/less able children: Limit the activity to two characters, focusing on creating a good character and a villain.

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