

Talk about it

SECTION

5

Make the case

Objective: To present a spoken argument.

What you need: Photocopiable page 23, copies of *Charlotte's Web*, writing materials.

Cross-curricular links: Citizenship.

What to do

- Use this activity after Chapter 8.
- Point out that by this stage in the story you find three characters very important. Who are they? Agree on Wilbur, Fern and Charlotte. Hold a brief discussion about them.
- Ask the children to work with a partner. Give each pair a copy of photocopiable page 23 and explain that the children must prepare a case for each character's claim to the leading role in the story. Suggest writing notes, listing three or four arguments supporting a character's claim. In order to speak persuasively, the children should note convincing phrases they could use.
- Remind the children to be ready to back

up each point with evidence by referring to an incident or chapter. The plot references around the page could be useful.

- Once the children have completed their notes, divide the class into three groups, assigning the support of one character to each group.
- Give yourself the task of chairing the debate, listening to arguments from all sides. Limit speaking time so everyone has the chance to contribute.
- Sum up what you have heard. Reach a decision and give your reasons, or if you prefer, take a class vote. Do the children think that their words were effective?

Differentiation

For older/more able children: Ask the children to prepare points against the characters.

For younger/less able children: Encourage the children to complete the photocopiable sheet for just one of the characters.

Listen to your conscience

Objective: To identify issues in stories.

What you need: Copies of *Charlotte's Web*.

Cross-curricular links: Citizenship.

What to do

- Use this activity after Chapter 12, preferably in a spacious room.
- Suggest that the author has made Templeton a mixture of good and bad. Refer to Chapter 6: the gander's worries about his goslings. Suggest that Templeton is now thinking of attacking the weakest gosling.
- Divide the class into two groups: Group A represents Templeton's good side and Group B his bad side. One side opposes the other in his mind, as he decides whether to attack. Ask the children in Group A to think of short comments to say to stop Templeton attacking. Ask Group B to think of remarks to persuade him.

● Organise the two groups into parallel lines facing each other. Take the role of Templeton. As you walk down the 'alley' between the lines, the children should speak their lines. Then, having listened to your conscience (their voices), make your decision.

- Let children take turns to play Templeton and repeat the conscience alley. Do the children come to the same conclusions as you did?
- Suggest other situations for a conscience alley. For example: should Wilbur be told about being killed?
- Create smaller conscience alleys so more children experience listening to their conscience.

Differentiation

For older/more able children: Ask the children to plan a conscience alley situation for Wilbur.

For younger/less able children: Provide sample comments to choose.

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