

Plot, character and setting

SECTION

4

Gaining information

Objective: To identify and summarise evidence from a text to support a hypothesis.

What you need: Copies of *The Magic Finger*, photocopiable page 15, writing materials.

Cross-curricular link: Geography.

What to do

- When posing the questions suggested here, encourage partner discussion before progressing to whole-class exchanges.
- Guide the children in scanning the first three pages. Ask: *Which characters are introduced? (Include the storyteller.) What do we learn about each? Where is the setting? (A farming area.) What subject features strongly? (Hunting.) On the first page, what does the storyteller promise to tell us about? At which point does this recount begin? (Then, one Saturday morning...)*
- Distribute photocopiable page 15. Ask the children to fill in the ‘What I know about...’

section of the sheet, summarising the information given so far about each story aspect.

- Point out that many questions remain unanswered. For example, will there be new characters? (Perhaps other members of the Gregg family.) Will the incident be funny or strange? Ask the children to summarise missing information in ‘What I don’t know yet about...’
- Invite the children to think about and write a prediction for the plot based on what they know already, listening to one another’s predictions. Suggest they remember them to see if they are correct.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Widen the study to include attitudes to hunting.

For younger/less confident learners: Make partner discussion a preparation for mainly pictorial recording of answers.

First impressions

Objective: To deduce characters’ reasons for their behaviour from their actions.

What you need: Copies of *The Magic Finger*, photocopiable page 16, writing materials.

Cross-curricular link: PSHE.

What to do

- Read the storyteller’s explanation of the Magic Finger (up to *after it was all over*).
- Let the children work with partners to scan the text and decide which character has received most attention so far from the author.
- Share ideas and agree on the girl. Ask for textual evidence of her presence on every page.
- Share ideas about how writers reveal characters’ personalities in a story. Explain that the writer usually lets readers form their own impression of a character. For example, after the first reference to the girl shouting at the Greggs, the reader may

decide she is quick-tempered.

- Give out copies of photocopiable page 16. Suggest that the children concentrate on one illustrated situation at a time and work with a partner to find where in the text that situation occurs, and how the girl behaves, speaks or thinks. What adjectives would they use to describe the girl in each situation?
- Finally, ask them to write four new adjectives, linking each to one of the pictured scenarios.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Ask the children to look at the picture facing the first page and write three adjectives to suit the girl in that situation. Progress to a full character sketch of the girl.

For younger/less confident learners: Reduce the choice of adjectives, leaving only the most appropriate.