

Plot, character and setting

SECTION

4

Fox country

Objective: To sustain engagement with longer texts, using different techniques to make the text come alive.

What you need: Copies of *The Midnight Fox*, photocopiable page 15, individual whiteboards and pens, flipchart.

Cross-curricular links: Geography, science.

What to do

- Tell the children that they are going to focus on the setting for the story, both in terms of the countryside or 'terrain' and the climate or weather. Read Chapter 10 together. Ask the children if they can pick out any specific features about the landscape that Tom describes, and list them on the flipchart (for example *rocks, ravine, boulders, creek*). Can they list any animals, other than the fox, that he describes? (For example *crayfish, chipmunks*.)
- Let the children work in pairs to scan the

chapter for information about the setting. Prompt with questions such as: *What animals or insects does Tom see?* Ask the children to write down their findings on their whiteboards.

- Bring the class back together and list their suggestions on the flipchart. Then hand out copies of photocopiable page 15 and ask the children to fill them in, scanning the novel for information.
- Discuss the setting in the context of the story. Is it an important feature and if so how? (The fox's habitat, a rural experience for Tom, countryside issues such as culling foxes.)

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Invite children to draft a short description of the countryside around the farm.

For younger/less confident learners: Let children draw a picture of the farm and the countryside around it, labelling key features.

Mapping the story

Objective: To make notes on and use evidence from across a text to explain events or ideas.

What you need: Copies of *The Midnight Fox*, a flipchart, writing materials and paper.

Cross-curricular link: Geography.

What to do

- Tell the children they are going to focus on the description of the farm and note all the key features of the farm and the surrounding countryside. Read Chapter 5 together.
- Ask the children to summarise any particular features of the farm, using evidence from the text (for example the pond, the rope swing on the tree in the front yard). List their suggestions on the board. When they have scanned through the chapter, as a shared activity, extend the list on the board using evidence from the text about the wider countryside (the creek, ravine,

stream and so on). They can refer to the notes they made on photocopiable page 15 in the previous activity.

- Ask the children to work in pairs to list any key events that happened at places listed on the flipchart. (For example, Tom spots the fox at the ravine, he rescues the cub from a rabbit hutch beside the garage.) When they have completed their lists, ask them to work together to draw a simple map showing the key features of the farm and surrounding countryside, and then label it with key events.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Children could write a map key defining key terms such as ravine, pond, thicket.

For younger/less confident learners: Provide a list of key events to label the map.