

Talk about it

SECTION

5

Who thinks there?

Objective: To understand underlying themes, causes and points of view.

What you need: Copies of *The Highwayman*, a copy of photocopiable page 23 for each pair of children.

Cross-curricular link: PSHE.

What to do

- Explain to the children that they will be working with a partner to talk about the characters' feelings at specific points in the poem. Hand out a copy of photocopiable page 23 to each pair of children and ensure that they also have a copy of the text.
- Ask the children to look at the first thought bubble: 'I'm so jealous'. Can they work out with their talk partner whose thought this could be and at what stage in the poem the thought may have occurred? Agree as a class that it is Tim's thought,

as he overhears Bess and the highwayman talk. Ask the children to record their ideas in the space and then to discuss and record their ideas about why he feels this. Encourage the children to refer to the text and illustrations as they talk. Agree that Tim is in love with Bess himself.

- Give the children time to talk and fill in the rest of the sheet. Point out that the second thought could be one of two people (Bess or the highwayman at the beginning).

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Challenge children to set new thought clues for their classmates.

For younger/less confident learners: For some children it will be enough just to locate the thought in the poem.

Telling our story

Objective: To use a range of oral techniques to present persuasive arguments and engaging narratives.

What you need: Copies of *The Highwayman*.

Cross-curricular links: PSHE, drama.

What to do

- Ask each group to take one of the following episodes and to allocate the characters between them. You might want to make the groups of unequal size as any number of children could be the soldiers, all of whom could have a different reaction to the events (for example, horror, fear, guilt, callous indifference).

- The meeting between Bess and the highwayman. Characters: Bess, Tim, the highwayman.

- The episode where Bess is tied up. Characters: Bess, the soldiers, the landlord and Tim.

- Bess' death. Characters: Bess, the soldiers, the landlord, Tim, the highwayman.
- The end. Characters: Bess' ghost, the highwayman's ghost, the landlord, Tim, an inn guest who see the ghosts.
- Ask the groups to talk in character about the event as if they were remembering it a few years later, for example: 'I was so excited when the highwayman visited me – my life at the inn was boring and hard work and he was so glamorous'; 'I was so jealous when I saw Bess and the highwayman – I had to think of a way to get rid of him'; 'When I saw that she'd shot herself I felt sick'.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Improvise a conversation between two characters years later.

For younger/less confident learners: Join a group of children taking on the role of the soldiers.