

Get writing

SECTION

6

A letter

Objective: To write a portrait of a character, in a letter.

What you need: Copies of *Kensuke's Kingdom*, flipchart or board, pens and pencils, photocopiable page 29, writing materials.

Cross-curricular links: History.

What to do

- Read the first paragraph of *Kensuke's Kingdom* together, and then the postscript. Ask the children why Kensuke makes Michael promise to keep quiet for ten years. (He does not want to be found.) What does the reader learn from the letter from Kensuke's son? (He and his mother survived the bombing of Nagasaki.)
- Tell the children that they are going to imagine that they are writing a letter from Michael to Michiya about his father. First, they should work in pairs to list the things they think Michiya might want to know. Share ideas as a class.

● Hand out the photocopiable sheet to help the children plan their letter. They can work in pairs and refer to the text, but they will need to summarise relevant material. Discuss if there is anything they would exclude from their letter. (For example, how thin and frail Kensuke was.) When they have finished, bring the class back together to discuss their findings.

● Ask the children to use their plan and work individually to write their letter. Before they start, revise the correct layout for a letter. (You will need to invent an address.)

Differentiation

For older/more confident children: Ask the children, in pairs, to use their material to write a dialogue between Michael and Michiya.

For younger/less confident children: Let pairs write a list of questions that Kensuke might ask Michael about his son if he knew they had met.

Kensuke's return

Objective: To write a sequel.

What you need: Copies of *Kensuke's Kingdom*, flipchart or board, whiteboards and pens, photocopiable page 30.

Cross-curricular links: Geography; History.

What to do

- Read together the last chapter. Discuss with the children Kensuke's reasons for staying on the island. How does he feel at the end of the story? How does Michael feel? Do the children think it is a satisfactory conclusion?
- Ask the children if they can imagine a different ending. Write some of their suggestions on the board. (Michael might stay, if his parents do not find him; Kensuke might return to Japan.)
- Tell them they are going to plan out an alternative ending, in which Kensuke decides to go home. Remind the children that this happened to the real-life character Hiroo Onoda, who had

been on an island in the Philippines for 30 years when he returned to Japan. How do they think Kensuke would feel when he got home? How would Nagasaki seem to him? What would make him happy or sad?

● Hand out the photocopiable sheet, explaining that the children need to think about the main characters, the setting and what happens in their story. They should first fill in the boxes for *Kensuke's Kingdom*, then fill in the part relating to their sequel.

● Bring the class back together and discuss their ideas.

Differentiation

For older/more confident children: Ask the children to write an episode from their sequel.

For younger/less confident children: Let the children imagine the meeting between Kensuke and his son and write a paragraph of dialogue between them.