

Plot, character and setting

SECTION

4

Making comparisons

Objective: To use syntax and context to build their store of vocabulary as they read for meaning.

What you need: Copies of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, a map of the world, dictionaries and photocopiable page 16.

Cross-curricular link: Geography.

What to do

- Inform the children that the story is set in America. Locate the United States on a map and show the distance from the UK.
- Explain that, although we speak the same language, there are some differences between British and American English. Ask the children to find a word on the first page that shows this difference (*Mom*) and ask what we use (mum).
- In the very first entry, highlight *grade levels* and *first grade*, which show a difference in the

American school system. What do they mean? (first graders are aged 6–7.) Ask: *What is our version of elementary school?* (Primary school.)

- With the class, read the last entry for January. What American words can the children identify? (For example, *homeroom*, *first period*, *kindergartners* and *diaper*.) If they don't know the meanings, can they deduce from the context?
- Hand out photocopiable page 16 and invite the children to match British English words with the American English words from the novel.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Challenge the children to make a list of at least ten other words that are different in the US to the UK.

For younger/less confident learners: Let the children concentrate on matching five of the words and allow them to ignore the last task.

A good friend?

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

What you need: Copies of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, Extract 3 (from page 10), writing materials and photocopiable page 17.

Cross-curricular links: PSHE, drama.

What to do

- Read Extract 3, reminding the children that Greg and Rowley are best friends, and that Greg doesn't tell us about any other good friends in the whole of the school year. With the class, discuss Greg's behaviour as a best friend.
- Read aloud the continuation of the extract in the book up until Greg gets home and his Mom takes him for ice cream. What do the class think about Greg's behaviour towards Rowley in this section? Ask the children to work in pairs to devise questions to ask both Greg and Rowley in

the hot-seat after this series of events.

- Choose a few of the children to take turns to sit in the hot-seat and answer the questions from the rest of the class. Follow up with a group discussion about why Greg behaves as he does, and what Rowley may now do as a result.
- Hand out photocopiable page 17, inviting the children to decide what each character thinks about Greg's actions. As a class, compare their answers.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: In pairs, ask the children to script and re-enact the conversation Mr Winsky has with Rowley.

For younger/less confident learners: Allow the children to concentrate on just three of the characters' opinions of Greg's actions, completing half of the photocopiable sheet.