

Plot, character and setting

SECTION

4

Timeline

Objective: To identify and make notes of the main points of section(s) of text.

What you need: Copies of *This Morning I Met a Whale*, whiteboard, individual whiteboards and pens.

Cross-curricular link: History.

What to do

- Ask the children to consider how much time they think the story spans. Encourage them to cite evidence using both the text and illustrations, asking: *What time of day is it when the story begins?* (Sunrise.) *What time of day is it when it ends?* (Night-time.)
- Arrange the children into pairs. Tell them they are going to plot a timeline for the day, from sunrise to night-time, marking in when they think key events occur.
- Suggest that they scan through the text first, listing events: Michael spots the whale, the whale talks to him, Michael goes to school and writes

this essay, the headmaster reports the whale in the river, and so on. They should then plot these events on the timeline.

- When they have finished, bring the class back together and discuss which episodes are fast moving (for example, when the children rush down to the river to see the whale) and which are slower moving (such as when the whale is talking to Michael). Invite the children to consider how the author varies the pace, with some slower, more reflective passages and some with fast-moving action.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Encourage the children to include as much detail as they can – such as Michael eating pizza and watching television in the evening.

For younger/less confident learners: Compile a list of key events on the whiteboard as a shared activity, then ask pairs to plot them on a timeline.

Amazing whale

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

What you need: Copies of *This Morning I Met a Whale*, whiteboard and photocopiable page 18.

Cross-curricular link: Science.

What to do

- Challenge the children to brainstorm words or phrases to describe the whale (such as 'huge', 'strong', 'brave', 'courageous', 'caring', 'clever'). Encourage them to think about his behaviour as well as his appearance. List their ideas on the whiteboard.
- Ask volunteers to explain why they chose their word. For example:
 - The whale is brave because he might get stranded and die.

- The whale is clever because he has found his way to London.
- Discuss which words or phrases on the list might apply to whales generally (such as 'huge', 'strong', 'clever') and which to this whale in particular (perhaps 'caring' and 'brave').
- Finally, hand out photocopiable page 18 and ask the children to complete the sheet using their knowledge of the whale in the novel.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Challenge the children to write further statements about the whale to add to the photocopiable sheet, citing evidence from the book to support their statements.

For younger/less confident learners: Let the children work in pairs to complete three of the statements on the photocopiable sheet.