Plot, character and setting

Plop's world

Objective: To look at how descriptive language is used to build up details of settings.
What you need: Copies of *The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark,* Photocopiable page 16, drawing and writing materials.

What to do
● This is an ongoing activity.
● Explain that we can build up a picture of the story setting in our minds through the detail provided in the text. Ask the children to listen out for details about where Plop lives.
● Mount a large piece of paper near to the area where the children listen to the story. After each session, add any setting details – preferably as drawings but words will suffice.
● The first detail will be the large tree in a field with a landing branch and nest-hole being evident. This is the focal point of the story, where Plop returns to discuss his feelings with his parents. As the story progresses, details will be added around the tree, such as the woods, the log, the garden with the swing and so on.
● Ask the children to complete photocopiable page 16 independently.

Differentiation
For older/more confident learners: Invite the children to write short descriptions of the various features to enhance the setting descriptions in the book. For example, they can describe the type of tree, how its branches spread, what other creatures live amongst its branches and in its trunk.
For younger/less confident learners: Provide the children with copies of the pages where the settings are described and invite them to highlight the words which describe the setting.

Moonlit nights

Objective: Explore how texts appeal to readers using descriptive language.
What you need: Copies of *The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark,* writing materials.

What to do
● This activity should be completed after reading the final chapter.
● Plop finally realises that he is no longer afraid of the dark after meeting Orion. Why do the children think that it was Orion who was able to convince Plop that he was a night bird after all? (He was an animal and partially 'nocturnal' too – they had more in common.)
● Orion's descriptions of different types of nights convince Plop that there is much to be enjoyed and discovered. Ask the children to scan through Chapter 7 in groups to find all these descriptions and record them on whiteboards. Discuss which descriptions the children like best and why.
● Orion states that moonlight is magic and turns everything to silver. Read the poem 'Silver' by Walter de la Mare.
● Work together to create additional descriptions of different types of nights. Think about how different sorts of weather and the seasons would affect the night and the locations, such as city or country. What can they hear? What else do they think Orion would have to show Plop if they were to go hunting together?

Differentiation
For older/more confident learners: Imagine Plop went hunting with Orion instead of going back to the nest-hole. Think about what they may have seen and write a description of what Plop may have told his parents about his trip when he returned home.
For younger/less confident learners: Discuss children's own experiences of the dark and encourage them to create a sentence to describe what the dark was like.