

Get writing

SECTION

6

By Jove, it's dated!

Objective: To compare how writers from different times and places present experiences and use language.

What you need: Copies of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, photocopiable page 28 and writing materials.

Cross-curricular links: History, PSHE.

What to do

- Suggest that *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, although set in 1940s wartime Britain, and published in 1950, is a timeless story and could take place anywhere. The story is as relevant and enjoyable today as it was when it was first written. Indeed, in 2005, a major film adaptation of the book filled cinema seats.
- What aspects of the narrative sound 'dated' – of their era, and therefore, old-fashioned? Note that the repeated advice never to shut oneself in a

wardrobe predates 'health and safety' laws. Point out, too, how modern fitted wardrobes can be opened from the inside. Ask: *How many of you have a cotton handkerchief in your pocket? Who has a tissue?* This important item, used as a token of good faith by Mr Beaver, was common then.

- Establish that the children's spoken language, especially informal phrases, date the book.
- Hand out photocopiable page 28 and ask the children to write modern translations of the dated phrases to create a glossary.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Ask them to imagine writing a story set in the future. Challenge them to invent futuristic-sounding phrases to replace those in the double-era glossary.

For younger/less confident learners: Challenge the children to research and compile a list of exclamations, old and new: how many can they find?

Adapting true stories

Objective: To experiment with different narrative form and styles to write their own stories.

What you need: Copies of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, photocopiable page 29 and writing materials.

Cross-curricular links: History, PSHE.

What to do

- Discuss how *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* can be viewed as an allegory of the life of Christ, Aslan representing Jesus, rising from the dead and saving humans from earthly evil and their own wrong-doing. Explain that an allegory is similar to a parody, except that it usually deals with serious subject matter.
- Challenge the children to take a famous, true story and plan their own story that is an allegory. For example, they might look at Captain Scott's attempt to be first to reach the South Pole or Helen Keller's battle with blindness and deafness

to learn sign language and be able to lead an independent life and help others.

- Explain that their main character will be based on the main character in the true story. Explain that an anthropomorphised animal has human characteristics. Suggest that they may use some or all anthropomorphised animal characters. Point out how animals should match the characters, such as the lion – noble, strong 'king of the jungle'; beavers – industrious, strong, resourceful; mice – numerous and with sharp teeth; and robin – friendly and tame.
- Hand out copies of photocopiable page 29 to help children's planning.

Differentiation:

For older/more confident learners: Challenge the children to write their stories in short, titled chapters.

For younger/less confident learners: Provide a selection of true stories for the children to read and refresh their memories of characters and events.