

Plot, character and setting

SECTION

4

Through Dahl's eyes

Objective: To show imagination through the language used to create emphasis, humour, atmosphere or suspense.

What you need: Copies of *Boy*.

Cross-curricular link: History.

What to do

- Identify Dahl's role as the first-person narrator of his autobiography. Ask the children about the impact it has on them, always viewing the stories through Dahl's eyes. (We naturally feel more sympathy for Dahl's plight as he shares his innermost thoughts and feelings.)
- Discuss the emotive language Dahl uses to build the tension in 'The Great Mouse Plot', 'Mr Coombes' and 'Mrs Pratchett's revenge' (for example, *All of a sudden, I was a murderer*). Ask: *Why does the reader instantly forgive his mischievous, cruel behaviour?* (Dahl ensures you are on his side as the narrator of events.)

- Revise with the children the features of a diary (an informal tone and the inclusion of personal thoughts and feelings).
- Ask the children to complete two diary entries from Dahl's viewpoint: the first, the night of 'The Great Mouse Plot' where he is proud at his brave risk-taking; and the second, the night after his terrifying day at school, describing his initial fear at Mrs Pratchett's suspected heart attack and subsequent terror at his punishment.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Invite the children to alter the narrative perspective and write two diary entries of the events from Mrs Pratchett's point of view.

For younger/less confident learners: Provide the children with sentence starters for both diary entries (for example, *Tonight I am proud to call myself a hero...*).

An epic journey

Objective: To identify how texts are organised.

What you need: Copies of *Boy*, photocopiable page 17 and A3 sheets of paper.

Cross-curricular links: Geography, ICT.

What to do

- After reading 'Going to Norway' and 'The magic island', discuss the duration it took the Dahl family to reach their holiday destination (four days) due to the travel limitations in the 1920s (no aeroplanes).
- Ask the children to work in pairs to cut out the statements on photocopiable page 17 and arrange them on a piece of A3 paper (portrait side) in the correct order to show each stage of the Dahl family's journey to Norway, using evidence and clues in the text. Encourage them to place gaps between each statement of varying width dependent on the duration of each stage

(for example, three days by boat would be longer than the taxi ride to the station).

- Invite the children to include interesting details on their 'timeline' (such as, the games the children played to pass the time on the steamer).
- Can the children comprehend the sheer scale of this exhausting journey? Compare Dahl's experiences with their own holiday travelling. Pick out clues in the text that clarify the reasons why he did not find the journey exhausting but rather a treat.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Ask the children to use an atlas or the internet to research the route from Llandaff, Wales, to Norway.

For younger/less confident learners: Provide the children with the first two statements in the correct order.