

Vocabulary for story settings

Objective

To develop a range of vocabulary for story settings using synonyms, and explore contrasts through antonyms.

Background knowledge

The focus in this section is the vocabulary of story settings, but the ideas could be used for other contexts, such as character development. Settings establish where and when a story takes place and are important in creating mood and atmosphere. Settings can be familiar places, such as school or a shopping centre, or unfamiliar with an inbuilt air of strangeness or menace, such as a derelict or uninhabited house. The activities explore a range of settings, developing a vocabulary of sights, sounds, smells and feelings, which is crucial in establishing the desired effects and impressions.

Activities

The first two activities are based on contrasting locations, developing knowledge of both synonyms and antonyms, while the third focuses on a setting that might appear in a mystery story.

- **Photocopiable page 25 'Story settings'**

Ask the children to close their eyes as you read each text extract, to imagine the setting and discuss any words that give them clues about it. Can the children draw the settings from the descriptions before they start the activity? Extend the vocabulary by encouraging the children to find synonyms for the suggested words.

- **Photocopiable page 26 'Contrasting settings'**

Ask the children to use their own ideas first and then provide thesauruses to develop the vocabulary. Use

the plenary to group words with similar meanings and to discuss antonyms (*dark/dismal* and *bright/colourful*; *welcoming* and *forbidding*).

- **Photocopiable page 27 'Word webs'**

The children may have used concept maps for other topics. This activity encourages them to think as broadly as possible in the initial stages of planning and describing a setting. They can then select the most appropriate or powerful words to write descriptions.

Further ideas

- **Powerful description:** Invite the children to finish the sentences *I could see...* and *I could hear...*

Encourage more confident learners to vary their sentences to add interest and impact, such as *Green mould grew up the slimy walls*.

- **Settings word banks:** Collect further vocabulary from shared and personal reading for a range of different settings. Use pictures of other locations, both familiar and mysterious, such as school, the supermarket, caves and desert islands, to generate a class collection of vocabulary for story settings. The children could describe the same setting at different times of day or in different seasons.

- **Character description:** Use similar activities to develop the children's vocabulary for describing characters in stories. Use villains and heroes from popular fiction to explore synonyms and antonyms.

- **Mystery stories:** Develop the work into writing more extended mystery stories. Encourage the children to explore the possibilities for mystery in both familiar and unfamiliar settings.



What's on the CD-ROM

On the CD-ROM you will find:

- Printable versions of all three photocopiable pages.