

Plot, character and setting

SECTION

4

Biscuits

Objective: To empathise with characters.

What you need: Copies of *Cliffhanger* and copies of photocopiable page 16.

Cross-curricular links: PSHE, citizenship.

What to do

- This activity works best when the children have completed reading the book.
- Ask the children to find where Biscuits is introduced. (Near the end of Chapter One.) Invite them to say what they think Tim's first impression is of Biscuits and to find evidence in the text to support their ideas. (He added a P.S. to the postcard saying that Biscuits was a friend.) Ask the children to describe what Biscuits does and says in Chapter One that make Tim think he is a friend.
- Now invite them to look through the story with a partner to find the events that feature Biscuits.

Ask them to tell each other how they feel about what Biscuits does or says, then complete the photocopiable sheet by writing a word to describe Biscuits for each example from the text.

- In a plenary session, invite the children to share and compare the words they chose to describe Biscuits. If it turns out that many have chosen the same words, encourage them to use a thesaurus to find alternative examples. Finally, ask the children to summarise Biscuits' character orally in one sentence.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Ask children to write a complete sentence to describe each example of Biscuits' speech or actions using their own adjectives.

For younger/less confident learners: In a group, discuss Biscuits' character, then draw up a list of adjectives for the children to choose from before they complete the photocopiable sheet.

Viewpoint

Objective: To take account of viewpoint, explaining how characters might see events from different points of view.

What you need: Copies of *Cliffhanger* and character name cards for Giles, Biscuits, Kelly and Jake.

What to do

- When the children have read Chapter Three, ask them to say again from whose point of view the story is told. (Tim's.) Together, draw up a list of the other main characters in the chapter: Jake, Giles, Biscuits and Kelly. Ask the children to retell the key events in the chapter, and make notes of the sequence of events on the board. Discuss how the tone used to describe the events might be different if it were told from another character's point of view – for example, ask the children to suggest how Jake might have described Tim's attempt at abseiling.
- Arrange the children into groups of four.

Allocate a main character to each child and give them a character name card. Beginning with the first key event written on the board, ask the first character (for example, Jake) to describe the event using the first-person voice. Move the retelling around the group, asking the second character to describe the second event and so on until everything that happened in the chapter has been described from different characters' points of view.

- Ask the children to compare how the events appear differently when told, for example, by Giles.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Ask the children to choose a different chapter and retell it from another character's point of view.

For younger/less confident learners: Choose one character and ask children to take turns to describe the events from that character's point of view.

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