

Assessment

SECTION

7

Assessment advice

Cliffhanger is a fast-paced adventure story written about a boy who is sent on an activity holiday. The activities terrify him and they are not the sort of adventures he wants to have. The main theme is that of a boy who, albeit reluctantly, faces up to his fears and comes out on top, showing children that everyone has different talents and abilities that are worth being proud of.

Jacqueline Wilson writes with a great deal of humour as she deals with Tim's underlying problems. Readers should be able to empathise with Tim's fears, his clumsiness and lack of self-esteem and courage.

This provides an ideal opportunity for assessing children's ability to read beyond the events and between the lines to discover

motives behind characters' behaviour.

Ask the children questions as they read about how characters feel at certain points – for example, *When Tim writes his first postcard how is he feeling? What happens to affect how he feels?* Encourage them to support their suggestions with reasons – for example, by asking: *What is there in the text that makes you think that?*

Humour is another of the important elements in the story. Invite the children to identify any actions, events or dialogue they thought was funny and to say why. How would the story change if it were not told with humour?

When the children do the assessment activity, their answers to the questions will demonstrate their ability to empathise with characters and to think beyond the obvious simple responses.

How did Tim feel?

Assessment focus: To demonstrate an ability to read between the lines of a text and empathise with a character's feelings; to sequence events.

What you need: Copies of *Cliffhanger*, copies of photocopiable page 32, scissors and coloured pens.

What to do

- Remind the children of the work they have done as they have read *Cliffhanger* on investigating viewpoint and characters' feelings. Provide them with a copy of photocopiable page 32, coloured pens and scissors.
- Ask the children, working individually, to read the list of questions and write out their answers in the spaces provided on the sheet. They can then cut out the strips and put the events

into the order in which they occur in the story.

- Once the children have ordered the questions, ask them to read through each one again and find the relevant section in the story. Invite them to check with the story and to add to or alter their original response if they wish to improve it, using a different-coloured pen. Explain that they can make notes on the reverse of key points as they check with the story to help them to give their answers. Encourage them to write more than one sentence.
- Next, invite the children to give their answers orally, and then to choose the question where they think they have given the best final answer. Ask them to copy out this question onto a sheet of paper and to write their answer in full underneath.