

TALK ABOUT IT

1. Education, education

Objectives

To participate in debates. To speak audibly and fluently.

What you need

Copies of *Skellig*.

Cross-curricular links

PSHE, citizenship

What to do

- Read Chapter 17 and note that Mina is being home-educated. Ask: *Do you like the idea of being educated like Mina, or do you think school is better?* Encourage children to give reasons.
- Divide the board into two columns and list arguments on both sides about home schooling. Encourage the children to talk about qualifications, socialising with friends, the pros and cons of a curriculum, available technology and so on. Ask what they would miss about school.
- Arrange the class into 'for' and 'against' groups. Tell them that they are going to plan a debate for and against home schooling. Each group will nominate a speaker to present a short argument.
- Briefly revise some of the key features of persuasive speaking (rhetorical questions, emotive language, emphatic words and so on).
- Give groups time to prepare, then invite the speakers to present their allocated point of view. Encourage others to say whether the arguments have convinced them and, if so, why.

Differentiation

Support: Allow several volunteers from each group to make statements on each side of the debate.

Extension: Discuss how different topics (such as flight) are taught/learned by Michael and Mina in their different teaching environments.

2. Something like an angel

Objective

To use spoken language to develop understanding.

What you need

Copies of *Skellig*, set of cards from photocopiable page 35 'Something like an angel', angel images/poems (optional).

Cross-curricular links

RE, art and design

What to do

- Read Chapters 20 and 21. Ask: *What do Michael and Mina discover about Skellig?* (that he has wings) *Why do you think their questions change from 'Who are you?' to 'What are you?'?* (They learn he is no ordinary human.)
- Encourage the children to share their ideas of what angels look like and what they do. Consider where we get our ideas of angels from (usually hymns, poems and paintings). Discuss how Skellig differs from traditional ideas of angels, with his smelly breath, dirty clothes, gruff manner and apparent weakness.
- Ask groups of six to use the discussion cards from photocopiable page 35 'Something like an angel' as prompts in a mini-debate on whether Skellig is an angel. Remind them to refer to the book. Ask them to consider whether his 'angelic' qualities change as the story develops.
- Discuss the groups' decisions. Divide the board into two columns and list all the things that make Skellig different from traditional angels and all the things that make him angel-like.

Differentiation

Support: Provide some images and texts featuring angels as prompts.

Extension: Ask groups to find and discuss other images of angels.