

Get writing

SECTION

6

Michael's diary

Objective: To make decisions about form and purpose, identify success criteria and then use them to evaluate their writing.

What you need: Copies of *This Morning I Met a Whale*, individual whiteboards and pens.

Cross-curricular link: PSHE.

What to do

- Remind the children that the events described in *This Morning I Met a Whale* span the course of one day, beginning at 5am and ending after dark. Invite them to create a diary entry that Michael might write, recording the day. The diary entry will cover the same events and time span as the book but must be much more concise.
- Briefly re-cap diary form and, as a shared activity, compile a checklist of criteria for assessing an effective diary entry. For example:
 - first person?
 - past tense?
 - records all main events?
 - concise?
 - informative/entertaining?

- Ask the children to summarise the main events that Michael would want to include, such as:
 - What happened when he saw the whale?
 - What happened in class?
 - What happened during the rescue effort?
- Allow the children time to draft their entries and then invite volunteers to read them to the class. Encourage assessment using the checklist.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Ask the children to expand the diary entry by describing Michael's feelings during the day, as well as the main events.

For younger/less confident learners: As a shared activity with the children, compile a list of key events to include in the diary entry before they begin.

The whale's journey

Objective: To develop and refine ideas in writing using planning and problem-solving strategies.

What you need: Copies of *This Morning I Met a Whale*, photocopiable page 30 and a map of Northern Europe showing Iceland and the UK.

Cross-curricular link: Geography.

What to do

- Ask the children if they can recall where Michael thinks the whale has come from (the North Atlantic, near Iceland or Scotland).
- Display a map of Northern Europe and encourage the children to suggest a possible route for the whale, south-east from Iceland down to the Thames estuary. What distance do they think he might have swum? Can they suggest a way of roughly assessing this? (Find out the distance from Reykjavik to London – nearly 2000 kilometres or 1200 miles.)
- Arrange the children into pairs and hand out

photocopiable page 30. Explain that they are going to label the map with details of what the whale might have seen on his journey south. They could include coastal towns or cities, or things like oil rigs, ships, barges and lighthouses.

- Next, encourage the children to work individually to write a paragraph in the whale's voice, describing his journey and the things he saw along the way.
- Invite volunteers to read their descriptions to the class and encourage constructive feedback.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Encourage the children to explore maps and guides to help them add accurate details to their map.

For younger/less confident learners: Allow the children to concentrate on a few details of the journey, drawing sketches with labels (for example, an oil rig, fishing boat, ferry or lighthouse).