

Get writing

SECTION

6

Jeering and joking

Objective: To show imagination through the language used to create emphasis, humour and atmosphere.

What you need: Copies of *Fantastic Mr Fox* and enlarged copy of Extract 2 (page 9).

Cross-curricular link: Drama.

What to do

- Display Extract 2 and read it together. Highlight in different colours: exclamation marks, speech marks and indentation of new speeches. Underline italicised words. Discuss the impact of these devices to indicate stressed words (italics), and shock, horror and urgency (exclamation marks). Ring the tag words.
- Invite the children to recall what happens next and how the local onlookers react. Ask: *What makes them jeer and laugh at the farmers?*
- Quote the speeches from the end of Chapter 6: 'You must be mad!' Discuss the meaning of

'jeered'. Ask: *What does it say about people's opinion of the farmers' antics?*

- Divide the children into small groups to role play people jeering and laughing. Encourage them to improvise and note what they say. What fresh insults and comments do they add? Offer rhetorical starters, such as 'Did you see...?'
- Write some suggestions on the board with punctuation. Invite ideas for further tag words, such as 'mocked', 'hooted' and 'scoffed'. What humorous actions might be added? (Wagging fingers, tapping foreheads.)
- Demonstrate how underlining handwritten words indicates italics.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Challenge the children to write a conversation between onlookers.

For younger/less confident learners: Write the children's suggestions with correct layout and punctuation for them to copy.

Goodies and baddies

Objective: To use settings and characterisation to engage readers' interest.

What you need: Copies of *Fantastic Mr Fox*, enlarged copy of Extract 1 (page 8) and photocopiable page 28.

What to do

- Ask the children to re-read the first two chapters. Talk about how the author creates 'baddies' and 'goodies'.
- Display Extract 1 and highlight expressive words – 'lousy', 'rip', 'blighter' – noting that adjectives, nouns and verbs can all be used emotively.
- Discuss what Dahl achieves by presenting the characters and setting ahead of the plot.
- Talk about how disagreements start in real life. (Through conflict of interest, desperation, intolerance, anger, fear, survival needs and defence.)

● Ask the children to imagine a story where a fox is the baddie and rabbits are the goodies who must outwit the fox. What elements in *Fantastic Mr Fox* might they copy? Mr(s) Rabbit having a title and Fox none? What alliterative adjective might replace 'fantastic' in the story title? (Bold Mrs Bunny?)

- In pairs ask them to discuss how to make the fox sound nasty and the rabbits lovable.
- Hand out copies of photocopiable page 28, invite the children to plan their characters and write a chapter introducing the rabbits or foxes.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Encourage the children to add further short chapters until the goodies finally outwit the baddies.

For younger/less confident learners: Help the children to develop their notes into sentences orally before writing them.