You Can... Use an interactive whiteboard for shared reading
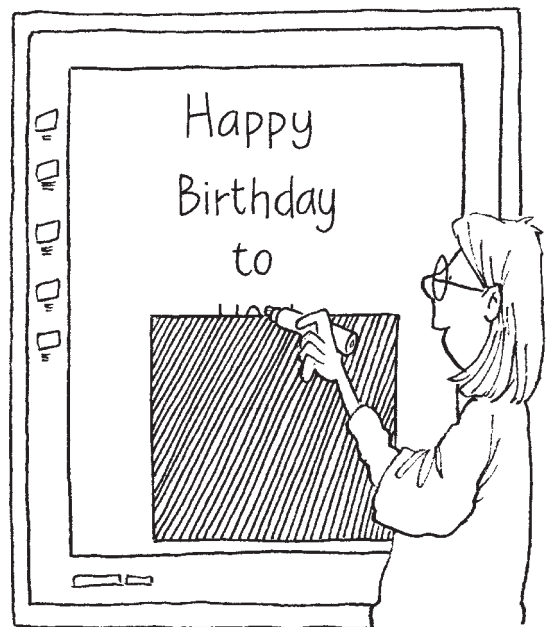
Choices of text for shared and guided reading are often limited to published big books. With an interactive whiteboard, choices become almost limitless, especially for schools with Internet access. Texts displayed electronically can be manipulated, edited or annotated, subject to any copyright restrictions. Unlike books, it is possible to save changes whilst keeping a copy of the original version. Versions of the text can also be printed off for investigation, or to be used as writing prompts.

Thinking points

● Subject to copyright, passages of texts from books can be copied and imported into programs like Microsoft Word or PowerPoint. Pictures can be scanned and placed to match the original design.

● Carefully chosen Internet pages make excellent shared texts. There are many exciting and relevant sites that offer a wide variety of text types (for example, the BBC web site, www.bbc.co.uk/schools). Use this content 'live', or copy it by clicking Print Screen and pasting into Word, copyright permitting.

● Take time to ensure the whiteboard is correctly configured, so that any annotations or marks made using the pens will be precise.

● Think about the size of the extract or web page and adjust View as required.

Tips, ideas and activities

● Control the amount of text visible with the Screen Shade or Reveal tool. This has a grab handle at the top and by dragging down using the whiteboard pen it reveals text line-by-line or paragraph-by-paragraph. This is an invaluable tool for focusing attention on each part of the text, and enables slower readers to keep up.

● Imported texts can be highlighted during a shared investigation. Click on the Highlight tool and drag it across the key words you wish to focus upon. This tool can be used in many ways: identifying use of different punctuation; locating high frequency words; identifying figurative language; finding links between paragraphs; identifying plurals; highlighting spelling patterns, for example words with a particular sound or blend. Having seen this process modelled, pages can be printed for children to investigate and highlight by hand independently.

● Use the Pen tool in different colours to note features of the text, for example connectives, as it is read. Annotation on the whiteboard is easy. Use pens to circle, underline, or draw arrows to anything on the page – words, paragraphs, headings, illustrations or captions. Also, encourage the children to come out and use the tools. Annotations can be saved, printed or removed as necessary.