

Get writing

SECTION

6

Adding pages

Objective: To signal sequence, place and time to give coherence.

What you need: Copies of *The Magic Finger*, paper, writing materials.

Cross-curricular link: Citizenship.

What to do

- Re-read the first page. Comment on the casual, conversational tone. Readers feel like they are being addressed directly. (*What? Oh, all right, then and I am going to tell you.*)
- Help the children scan eight more pages and discuss the writer's style. Is dialogue or narrative description used? (There is a mixture.) Examine the variety of sentence construction and ask the children to identify examples of simple, compound and complex sentences. Point out dramatic short sentences and short paragraphs. (*Well, that did it. I saw red.*) What is their effect? (They emphasise the speed of events.)
- Investigate other style aspects such as expressive

exclamation marks, regular time connectives (*once; one Saturday morning*) and detailed descriptions (*lovely, young; huge, bushy*).

- Point out the last paragraph in the Mrs Winter episode; the following page leaves the reader wondering about Mrs Winter. Present a scenario: two pages are missing at this point in the story. They contain information about Mrs Winter.
- Encourage partner discussion about the character of Mrs Winter before the children write the missing text. Remind them to follow Dahl's writing style, and to write as the girl.
- Afterwards let the children read their pages to one another in reading groups.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Ask children to add text between *I started shouting at them* and *I never meant to do*.

For younger/less confident learners: Provide children with a writing frame of opening words for paragraphs.

Funny situations

Objective: To identify features that writers use to provoke readers' reactions.

What you need: Copies of *The Magic Finger*, photocopiable page 28, paper, writing materials.

Cross-curricular link: PSHE.

What to do

- Re-read the last paragraph on the first page. Ask what the girl means by *funny*. (It could be 'humorous' or 'strange/peculiar'.)
- Read up to the end of the hunting trip. Point out *That's funny* after Mr Gregg has missed the ducks. Ask: *What does Mr Gregg mean?* ('Odd'.) Examine the journey home. Are there references to how Mr Gregg feels? (*Mr Gregg did not like it one bit.*) Do the children find the situation amusing or odd?
- Explore the ducks' behaviour when Mr Gregg

goes to collect firewood. Point out *He was now quite afraid*. Encourage partner and then class debate about the writer's intentions. Ask: *Does Dahl want you to find the ducks' behaviour amusing or strange? Has Dahl presented Mr Gregg as a 'bad' character so that we enjoy laughing at his fear of ducks?* (Mention Mr Gregg's treatment of animals and the girl.)

- Give out photocopiable page 28 and discuss the other scenarios on the sheet. Ask the children to scan the situations mentioned and to write what they find funny and in which way. Encourage textual references.

Differentiation

For older/more confident learners: Ask children to write a new funny situation for the Greggs' story.

For younger/less confident learners: Provide sentence starters. Ask for only one reason for their answer.

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