

Get writing

SECTION

6

What about the ending?

Objective: To write an alternative ending.

What you need: Copies of *Charlotte's Web*, paper, whiteboards, writing materials.

What to do

- Use this activity after finishing the book.
- Ask the children to write on individual whiteboards what they expect in any novel's final chapter. Compare ideas, agreeing on some essentials for a class list. For example: plot loose ends are tied up; plot questions are answered; plot problems are resolved.
- Identify some of these features in *Charlotte's Web*. Point out the early problem in Chapter 4: Wilbur's loneliness. This is resolved permanently in Chapter 22 by friendship with Charlotte's descendants. Revise the issue of animal treatment in Chapter 1. The resolution is kindness: Wilbur has good care 'all the rest of his days'.

- How much time is covered by most of the book? (One year.) Point out that in the final chapter the plot extends to an undefined period in the future. Do the children approve?
- Ask the children to think about alternative endings. Discuss possibilities, for example: a less sentimental ending; a start and finish in spring; the last chapter matches the first with a focus on the Arable household; a better friend for Wilbur; more information about Templeton.
- Ask the children to re-read the final pages of Chapter 21 before they plan and write their new ending for the book.
- Afterwards, let the children compare endings.

Differentiation

For older/more able children: Ask the children to write a second alternative ending.

For younger/less able children: Support the children by providing a paragraph plan.

Book reviews

Objective: To write a brief helpful review tailored for a real audience.

What you need: Photocopiable page 30, enlarged for class work, whiteboards, copies of *Charlotte's Web*, paper, writing materials.

What to do

- Use this activity after finishing the book.
- Discuss how the children select reading books. Explain that you rely on book cover blurb or reviews. Ask the children to write on individual whiteboards three questions they expect a review to answer. Compare answers and look for common themes.
- Display an enlarged copy of photocopiable page 30. Explain the context: a magazine for infant school teachers; the reviews help teachers identify a book to suit their class.
- Investigate the text, applying the children's individual whiteboard questions. Highlight

where they are answered. Identify other points, for example: the book title and author's name start the review; illustrations and writing style are mentioned.

- Present a scenario: you are compiling a resource – a collection of book reviews, reminding you of different stories and helping children choose one to read.
- Ask the children to plan and write a review of *Charlotte's Web*. Say that they need to include some information, but not give away all the story plot. Stress that the children should write in their own words, using text copies only to check names or events. Ask them to mention the audience age range.

Differentiation

For older/more able children: Ask the children to review a book of a similar genre, explaining the link.

For younger/less able children: Supply a writing frame of suggested sentence openers.

PAGE

27