

# Plot, character and setting

SECTION

4

## Stig's den

**Objective:** To understand how writers create imaginary worlds, evoking them through detail.

**What you need:** Large sheets of plain paper, copies of *Stig of the Dump*, writing and drawing materials.

**Cross-curricular links:** Design and technology.

### What to do

- Do this activity after the children have read Chapters 1 and 2, much of which is devoted to a detailed description of Stig's den.
- Ask the children to sketch a picture or draw a plan of the den. Prompt them to consider different aspects: its natural setting in the chalk-pit; how Stig has furnished it; how he and Barney 'improved' it, for example, by adding a chimney and window. Explain that they will need to scan the first two chapters for relevant passages and

then read closely for significant detail. Explain also that you are not looking for a polished, neat picture but one that shows, accurately and fully, what the den looks like.

- Encourage the children to add explanatory labels, indicating, for example, what things are for, who made them and how.

### Differentiation

**For older/more confident children:** Ask the children to focus on what the den looks like at the end of Chapter 2, when Barney and Stig have worked on it together. This challenges them to consider a longer passage of text.

**For younger/less confident children:** Suggest that the children focus on just one part of the den at a time, for example, the plumbing system, the chimney or window. They could then produce separate images of these, rather than the whole scene.

## Barney and Stig work together

**Objective:** To identify social and cultural issues in stories.

**What you need:** Photocopiable page 15, copies of *Stig of the Dump*, writing materials.

**Cross-curricular links:** Design and technology.

### What to do

- The children should attempt this activity when they have read the first three chapters.
- Recall the various technological tasks that Stig and Barney work on. Draw out the idea that they collaborate on these, each bringing the skills and knowledge of their respective times and cultures.
- Hand out copies of the photocopiable sheet, and explain how to use it to explore and record these collaborations.
- Share ideas and prompt the children to relate them to broader themes. How is Stig presented?

(Not as an ignorant savage, but as someone who is skilled and inventive.) Does Barney bring civilisation to Stig? (This is debatable. Stig appears to be living successfully and contentedly in the chalk-pit. The things Barney brings – jam jars, tins – can be seen as making Stig's life easier and more comfortable, but does he really need them? Note in particular Stig's reaction to the chimney at the end of Chapter 2.)

### Differentiation

**For older/more confident children:** Encourage the children not just to describe what Stig and Barney *did* but to comment more generally on what this tells us about their cultures and worlds.

**For younger/less confident children:** Direct the children to the pages they need to re-read to find out about the four tasks on the photocopiable sheet. Ask them to write just one statement, beginning either, 'Barney...' or, 'Stig...', in each 'cell'.