

THE BOY AT THE BACK OF THE CLASS

VOCABULARY

Useful words

Objective

To understand that words from a text can be useful in their own writing.

What you need

Copies of *The Boy at the Back of the Class*.

What to do

- After reading Chapter 1, return to the detailed description of Michael beginning 'Michael has the neatest'. Read the two paragraphs aloud, drawing attention to 'impressed', 'ingenious', 'gadgets'. On the whiteboard, write brief explanations in child-friendly language: 'useful things', 'really clever', 'thinks something is good'. Ask the children to match each focus word with the correct explanation. Confirm the answers.
- Display the Focus word table and complete the first two columns together.
- Return to the text and read the sentences containing the focus words aloud. Ask: *Could the focus words be used in different sentences?* Share partner and then class ideas before writing three sentences in the third column of the table. (For example, 'The car had a special gadget for warming and cooling the driver'; 'A self-watering plant pot was an ingenious idea'; 'The job interviewer was impressed by the applicant's answer'.)
- Provide dictionary definitions in the fourth column and discuss these together.
- Suggest that these words would be useful in contexts other than this story. List three scenarios: a scientist is working on inventions; an extension is built on a house; the secondary school holds an open evening.
- Organise groups of four to discuss which scenario best allows them to use which focus word and to compose sentences. Listen in for interesting sentences to share with the class.
- Add the focus words to your classroom word wall, reminding your class to use them.

FLUENCY

Hearing the voice

Objective

To read smoothly and expressively, so that descriptions come to life for the reader.

What you need

Copies of *The Boy at the Back of the Class*.

What to do

- After reading Chapter 9, comment on how proud the storyteller is of the 'Unexpected Adventure' and the resulting pomegranate. Remind the children that the book is written in the first person. Ask: *Who is telling the story?* (an unnamed child storyteller) Point out that people and scenes are described as the child storyteller, with an excitable personality, sees and reacts to them.
- Model read the first two sentences of Chapter 9, in which the storyteller describes the adventure. Comment on your correct pronunciation of 'pomegranate'; your increasingly excited tone when you mention 'the man in the red turban'; your awed 'the king's heart'. Point out your emphasis of 'red' and 'heart' and your response to punctuation.
- Continue in this way, reading aloud as far as 'bursting to get out'. Identify the reading techniques that improve your reading fluency: volume, accuracy, speed, expression, intonation (your voice's rise and fall), and pauses. Stop after some sentences for the children to echo read, copying your modelled reading.
- Ask pairs to read the text to each other in the same way, taking turns with a sentence each, and advising each other on techniques before they read the paragraphs together.
- Begin a new reading of the text, choosing pairs of children to 'jump in' and take over reading.

Differentiation

Support: Put two pairs together to work on their fluency, so that less confident children can always read aloud with a partner.

Extension: Select children to jump in and read individually.