

Group Reading at KS2 and KS3

The discussion prompts for *Granny was a Buffer Girl* and *The Children of Winter* have been produced to provide a focus for group reading.

The questions have been designed to help pupils develop key reading skills and specifically to encourage them to make inferences and deductions; make predictions and check them in the light of further reading; empathise; reflect on the writer's craft, make connections with their own experience, make evaluative judgements.

In addition to the specific questions for each chapter, generic questions relating to character, plot, setting, themes, language, point of view and structure can be posed. The following sources provide useful support for thinking about appropriate questions and prompts:

- Aidan Chambers (1993) Tell Me Thimble Press
- Angela Hobsbaum, Nikki Gamble and David Reedy (2006) Guiding Reading at KS2, University of London, Institute of Education

Prior to group reading sessions

Preparation for group reading is important. Pupils can read chapters independently and then record their thoughts in reading journals, which are used as the basis for discussion during group reading. Pupils who do not have experience of keeping reading journals will need to have the process modelled. Demonstrate the range of entries that they can make:

- Notes: about plot, setting character, key phrases, new words, uses of figurative language
- Questions: speculations, ambiguities, that they could ask the author, confusions, about the themes
- Personal responses: likes, dislikes, connections with own experience, emotional responses, changes in thinking
- Graphic representation: drawings, diagrams, mind-maps, emotion charts,

Plenary Sessions

Plenaries are an important part of the group reading session. Draw groups together. Ask them to articulate their thoughts about what they have read and take their thinking forward by offering fresh perspectives and challenges to their thinking. To prepare for a

plenary pupils might, for example, write down three things they have discovered in their group reading session and feedback to the class.

After Reading the novel

Pupils can make a summary statement in their reading journals, taking account of the following questions:

- What did you most enjoy about reading this book?
- Was did you find most difficult?
- What questions do you still have after reading?
- What have you learned from reading this book?

Alternatively, they might be asked to write a review. Provide some good models of reviews from magazines and newspapers. Prompts will help pupils structure their reviews rather than retell the story.

These might include:

- Brief synopsis
- Indication of the genre
- The impact of the book – how the reader's attention is captured at the beginning
- Personal comment with justification
- Reservations (if any) with justification
- Concluding recommendation

Another idea is to produce a film trailer for the book using a storyboard format. Pupils will need to consider how trailers differ from review writing, drawing on their experience of trailers that they have seen at the cinema. Use visual images, sound effects and voiceover narration. This activity will be most successful where pupils have already had experience of analysing media texts and have some knowledge of camera shots and sequences.

Further suggestions for group reading are available on the DfES Standards website www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/