

Top tips for using novels (1)

Decide on where you will stop reading in order to carry out each activity or discussion. Here is a whole alphabet of activities that should spark your children's imagination.

A Ask the children to discuss their preferences and to explain their ideas.

B Together explore links and connections. Ask: *Are there links between this story, other stories or works of art? How does the tale make a link with your own life?*

C Ask the children to list possible questions, such as things that they are not sure about and would be useful to discuss. List the questions and then choose the ones that would be most fruitful to talk about.

D In pairs, encourage gossip about the events so far.

E In stories where the characters have problems to solve, invite children to work in pairs with one in role as an agony aunt and the other in role as a character who will explain the problem. Encourage the 'agony aunt' to provide some advice.

F In pairs, sit the children back to back with one child in role as a character phoning a friend. Encourage the character to explain what has been going on while the friend listens and then responds with advice.

G Working in-role as a character, invite the children to write a diary entry or letter to a friend about the main event/what has just happened. Alternatively, they could write to a character offering advice.

H In role as journalists, invite the children to interview a character and write a news item – or broadcast it, with an 'outside broadcasting unit' carrying out the interview.

I With the class create and film a cartoon or filmed version of the scene.

J Build a story museum with the children to represent scenes from the novel by gathering and displaying objects, sounds (use talking tins) and images from the story.

K Provide or create with the children news bulletins for key moments in the story.

L Together draw 'feelings graphs' showing the ups and down for the different characters in the story.



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Top tips for using novels (2)

- M** Encourage children to choose their favourite word, phrase, line or section and share. Ask: *Why do you like that part?*
- N** Display images and ask: *Which is the one image that says the most in the story? What does it say to the reader?*
- O** With the class select words that encapsulate the essence of the book. Make a list of these key words and then select the 'best'/'truest' five words.
- P** Let them choose a favourite line, phrase or word from the novel. Invite them to stand in a circle, take it in turns to step into the circle and say the word aloud with a gesture. Encourage everyone else to then repeat the word and gesture.
- Q** Stand the group in a circle and ask each of them to choose an action from an event in the story that is memorable, then step into the circle and mime the action. Then everyone else can imitate the action.
- R** In pairs, encourage them to retell the story word-by-word or sentence-by-sentence, or retell the story in cartoon form.
- S** As a whole class select all the verbs from an action passage and list them in the order that they appear. Can they say them aloud with expression? Ask: *What is the effect?* Now try the same thing with the adjectives or nouns.
- T** Provide time for individuals to create items from a book, including letters, diary entries, news items, postcards – any written item that appears in a story or might appear.
- U** Invite children to role-play any event in a story that takes place in a different setting, but is referred to or suggested by the book.
- V** During a reading session with the class alter a story by stopping, considering possible plot lines and then retelling the story or rewriting it.
- W** As a whole class put especially bad characters on trial.
- X** Ask children to create the back page blurb for the story and design a new cover or advert.
- Y** Invite groups to create a 'for sale' advert for a character or the book itself.
- Z** Provide time for children to write an end-of-term report for a character.

