

helps to map out the class's view of the important meaning and is a way of holding on to ideas for later. Asking these questions leads children inevitably into a fuller discussion. They can respond to a particular illustration as well as to the text. As the children grow, they will have internalised the prompts and will use them as a scaffold for discussion of any kind.

Re-enactment & role play

Revisiting stories through a range of play-based experiences helps children to step into the world of the book and to explore it more actively. Through role play and drama, children are encouraged to experiment with the 'what if?' of plot and make it their own. Role play is a particularly effective way for children to inhabit a fictional world, imagining what the world of the story would be like, and illuminating it with their own experience. It enables children to put themselves into particular characters' shoes and imagine how things would look from that point of view. Through drama and role play children can imagine characters' body language, behaviour and tones of voice in ways that they can draw on later when they write.

ROLE PLAY IN ACTION...

Freeze-frame

Freeze-frames are still images or tableaux. They can be used to enable groups of children to examine a key event or situation from a story and decide in detail how it could be represented. When presenting the freeze-frame, one of the group could act as a commentator to talk through what is happening in their version of the scene, or individual characters can be asked to speak their thoughts out loud.

Thought-tracking

This technique is often used in conjunction with freeze-frame. Individuals are invited to voice their thoughts or feelings aloud using just a few words. This can be done by tapping each person on the shoulder or holding a cardboard 'thought-bubble' above their head. Alternatively, thought-tracking can involve other members of the class speaking a chosen character's thoughts aloud for them.

Hot-seating

When hot-seating with young, inexperienced children, an adult



role plays a central character from a poem or story and is interviewed by the children. This activity involves children closely examining a character's motivation and responses. Before the hot-seating, they need to discuss what it is they want to know and identify questions they want answering. When the children become more experienced in hot-seating, they delight in taking on the role of the central character.

Responding to illustration

In the best picture books, illustration and text work closely together to create meanings. Children are naturally drawn to the illustrations in a book and are frequently far more observant than an adult reader. Children's interest in images and their ability to read them can be developed through carefully planned interventions with an emphasis on talk. Discussions of this kind can include all children and help to make print more accessible.

The children's books featured on CLPE's Power of Reading project, for example, have been chosen because of the quality of the illustrations they contain and the ways in which the illustrations work with the text to create meaning for the reader. Children will need time and opportunities to enjoy and respond to the pictures, and to talk together about what the illustrations contribute to their understanding of the text. Children can develop their responses to the book by creating artwork in a style

similar to the illustrations, and you'll find other suggestions as to how to take advantage of illustrations in the panel on this page.

USING PICTURES

It's simple to harness illustrations to engage children in the stories they encounter. Try these five approaches...

- Introducing a new book with a key illustration intrigues and motivates children to want to find out more. You can elicit the children's initial responses to a character, make predictions and draw connections. The best illustration for this is often not the cover illustration, so always read and engage with the text first to ensure your chosen illustration will provoke response.
- Conceal part of an illustration from a text to provoke discussion, then provide the complete image to demonstrate how your interpretation changes according to the amount of information you are given.
- Ask children to list what they can tell about a character from an illustration, his/her appearance, life and personality. Prepare a 'role on the wall' or enlarged outline of the character to which children's responses can be scribed – appearance and facts on the outside, and personality or emotions on the inside.
- Ask children to think what characters in an illustration might be thinking. This, alongside role play and freeze-frame, could lead to writing in role.
- Ask children to raise their own questions about the puzzles in a given image, using the Aidan Chambers 'Tell me' approach (see bit.ly/2gnq85u).

The Centre for Primary Literacy's Power of Reading training programme supports schools in raising engagement and attainment in reading and writing for all pupils. The Power of Reading website (accessible by subscription – visit clpe.org.uk/powerofreading) provides access to an extensive bank of teaching sequences and materials developed to complement the training. Register at clpe.org.uk to receive information about further training and free resources.