PAT Teaching Resources Centre
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PAT Reading: Teaching activity

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Teaching activity: Contrasting characters

ACTIVITIES

Learning intention

For students to be able to locate evidence in a text with multiple characters that is specific to a particular character.

Explain

that texts often set up contrasts where characters have different perspectives or points of view on the same topic. One character may be positive and optimistic, another quite negative and a third character conciliatory, trying to find a solution that everyone agrees with. Students need to learn how to differentiate the responses so they attribute each piece of evidence or clue to the right person.

Show

There was a ploughboy, Dick, who sometimes came into our field to pluck blackberries from the hedge. When he had eaten all he wanted he would have what he called fun with the colts, throwing stones and sticks at them to make them gallop. We did not much mind him, for we could gallop off; but sometimes a stone would hit and hurt us.

One day he was at this game, and did not know that the master was in the next field; but there he was, watching what was going on; over the hedge he jumped in a snap, and catching Dick by the arm, he gave him such a box on the ear as made him roar with the pain and surprise. As soon as we saw the master we trotted up nearer to see what went on.

'Bad boy!' he said, 'Bad boy! to chase the colts. This is not the first time, nor the second, but it shall be the last. There—take your money and go home; I shall not want you on my farm again.' So we never saw Dick any more. Old Daniel, the man who looked after the horses, was just as gentle as our master; so we were well off.

Dick

Picks the blackberries

Throws sticks and stones at the colts for fun

Caught by the master and boxed on the ear

Roars with pain and surprise

Given money and told to leave

The colts

Gallop away from sticks and stones

Don't mind much

Sometimes hit which hurts

Trot up to see the master boxing Dick's ear

The master

Sees Dick throwing things at colts

Jumps hedge, catches Dick and boxes him on the ear

Gives Dick pay and sends him off forever

Old Daniel

Looks after the horses and is gentle

Learn to cut the evidence into strips and paste it onto a larger sheet. Leave a space under each line of evidence for later additions. The evidence could be placed in a table, as per the example below.

Ask students to cut the evidence into strips and paste it onto a larger sheet. Leave a space under each line of evidence for later additions. The evidence could be placed in a table, as per the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dick</th>
<th>The colts</th>
<th>The master</th>
<th>Old Daniel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picks the blackberries</td>
<td>Gallop away from sticks and stones</td>
<td>Sees Dick throwing things at colts</td>
<td>Looks after the horses and is gentle</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example of students' work to help guide teachers through the activity

Video demonstrating how a teacher sets up this lesson

Find out more www.acer.org/pat-trc

Curriculum links

Curriculum code: ACELY1713

Linked from: Comprehension: Interpreting implied information 120-129
Teaching activity: **Contrasting characters**

**Ask** students to compare answers between their groups and justify their placement of evidence.

**Ask** students to think about each character’s perspective on the events in the extract.

**Ask** students to use the evidence to identify how each of the characters felt, or was likely to feel during the events.

**Record** the feelings in a different coloured pen under each line of evidence.

**Discuss** the quality of the evidence with students. How sure are they that the characters would feel that way? Could another feeling fit a particular piece of evidence?

**Give** students the following incorrect inferences (understandings) from the text:
- Dick was angry with the colts.
- The colts were terrified of Dick.
- The master was mean to Dick.

**Ask** students to work in pairs to identify how these incorrect inferences might have been made. Why might a reader have incorrectly assumed this?

**Ask** students to find and record the evidence to disprove each of them.

**Share** students’ responses.

**EXTENSION**

**Ask** students to work in pairs to make accurate inferences (understandings) about: Dick’s attitude to the colts; the colts’ attitude to Dick; and old Daniel’s attitude to Dick.

**Find** and record the evidence to prove the statements and justify your answers.

**Encourage** students to use a thesaurus to find the most appropriate words.

**Ask** students to reflect on the events in the extract and if they think the action taken by ‘the master’ was justified.

**Ask** How would you react if you saw someone throwing stones at a horse?

**Discuss** and share students’ responses and provide feedback.

- Watch a teacher guide students through this activity
- Video of a teacher guiding students through the activity
- Video of students applying their knowledge
- Extension activity that further solidifies the skills being targeted