

Matilda - Throwing the Hammer

Lesson
plan

Overview

Learning objective

- To explore the features of storytelling, especially exaggeration.

Learning outcome

- To write a story entitled Amanda Thripp's Revenge.

Book reference

- Chapter 10: Throwing the Hammer.

Cross-curricular link

- Literacy, Art, Drama, PSICHE.

Resources

- Quotations from the text that students can refer to (see below) and highlighter pen.



Starter

- Play the game, Two and a Half Truths. This asks the children to say three facts about themselves, two of which are true and one of which is an exaggeration; for example: "My favourite colour is red, I have seen a tiger and my sister is a famous singer" The rest of the class guess which one is the half truth.
- Draw out the concept of exaggeration.

Main teaching activity

- Read chapter 10 from the beginning until "At that point something strange happened..."
- Focus on Hortensia's retellings of her tricks on Miss Trunchbull.
- The children identify which parts sound like exaggeration, using highlighter pens

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“The first time”, Hortensia said, “I poured half a tin of Golden Syrup on to the seat of the chair the Trunchbull was going to sit on at prayers. It was wonderful. When she lowered herself into the chair, there was a loud squelching noise similar to that made by a hippopotamus when lowering its foot into the mud on the banks of the Limpopo River...”

“...So when the Trunchbull sat down on the Golden Syrup, the squelch was beautiful. And when she jumped up again, the chair sort of stuck to the seat of those awful green breeches she wears and came up with her for a few seconds until the thick syrup slowly came unstuck. Then she clasped her hands to the seat of her breeches and both hands got covered in the muck. You should have heard her bellow.”

“I chose a time when I knew the Trunchbull was out of the way teaching the sixth-formers, and I put up my hand and asked to go to the bogs. But instead of going there, I sneaked into the Trunchbull’s room. And after a speedy search I found the drawer where she kept all her gym knickers.”

“Go on,” Matilda said, spellbound. “What happened next?”

“I had sent away by post, you see, for this very powerful itching powder,” Hortensia said. “It cost 50p a packet and was called The Skin-Scorcher. The label said it was made from the powdered teeth of deadly snakes, and it was guaranteed to raise welts the size of walnuts on your skin. So I sprinkled this stuff inside every pair of knickers in the drawer and then folded them all up again carefully.”

“Did it work?” Lavender asked.

“Well,” Hortensia said, “a few days later, during prayers, Miss Trunchbull suddenly started scratching herself like mad down below. A-ha, I said to myself. Here we go. She’s changed for gym already. It was pretty wonderful to be sitting there watching it all and knowing that I was the only person in the whole school who realised exactly what was going on inside the Trunchbull’s pants. And I felt safe, too. I knew I couldn’t be caught. Then the scratching got worse. She couldn’t stop. She must have thought she had a wasp’s nest down there. And then, right in the middle of the Lord’s prayer, she leapt up and grabbed her bottom and rushed out of the room.

“It’s like a war,” Matilda said, overawed.

“You’re darn right it’s like a war,” Hortensia cried. “And the casualties are terrific. We are the crusaders, the gallant army fighting for our lives with hardly any weapons at all and The Trunchbull is the Prince of Darkness, the Foul Serpent, the Fiery Dragon with all the weapons at her command. It’s a tough life. We all try to support each other.”

Matilda - Throwing the Hammer cont.

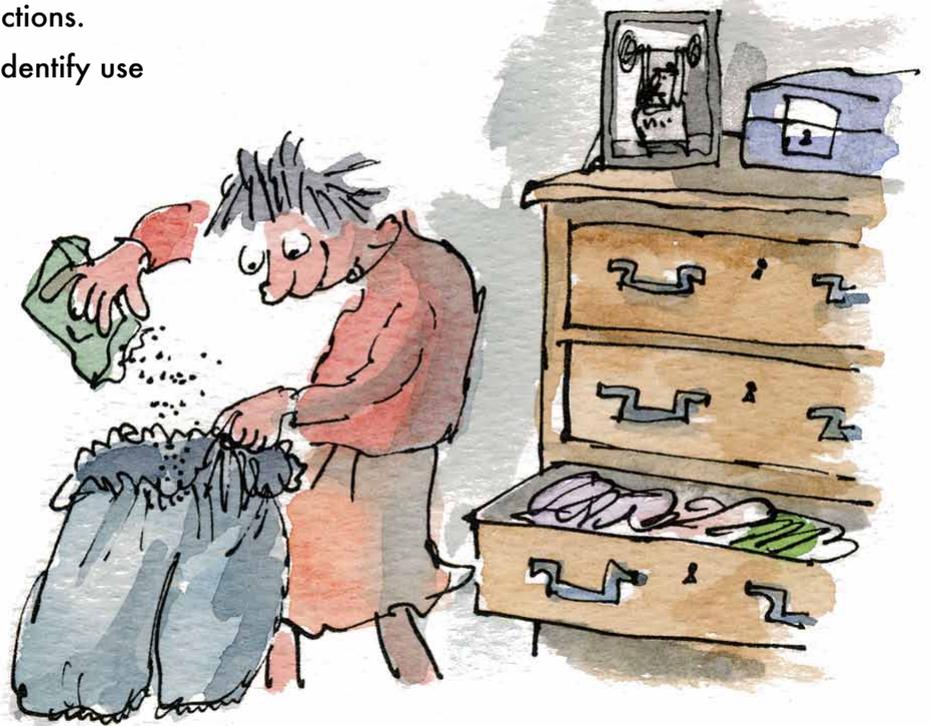
Group or independent activity

- Read the rest of the chapter to the class.
- In groups, create a scene entitled Amanda Thripp's Revenge, where Hortensia helps Amanda Thripp to get her own back on Miss Trunchbull using a special trick.
- Write a description as if the narrator were Hortensia retelling the story. Use lots of exaggeration in the language.
- It may start like this:

"You want to hear a good story? Well, Amanda Thripp wanted to get her own back on Miss Trunchbull. She asked me for help because I'm the best at playing tricks on our nasty Headmistress. This is what we did..."

Plenary

- In role as Hortensia, one child from each group recounts the story of Amanda Thripp's Revenge. While Hortensia tells the story, the rest of the children from the group can mime the actions.
- After listening, the rest of the class can identify use of exaggeration in the language.



Other activities

- Write an extra scene in which Hortensia and Amanda Thripp carry out the revenge.
- In character as Mr and Mrs Thripp, write a letter of complaint to Miss Trunchbull about her treatment of your daughter Amanda Thripp. Then become Miss Trunchbull and write a contemptuous reply.
- Take the children on an imaginary journey: You are late for school and in your panic you forgot your school jumper. It is the school photo today. All the children are lined up outside getting ready for the school photo but they are being inspected by Miss Trunchbull first. You rush to the end of the line and wait as Miss Trunchbull walks down the line and finally gets to you.
- In pairs, tell each other:
 - How do you feel as Miss Trunchbull gets closer?
 - What happens when Miss Trunchbull reaches you?
 - How does Miss Trunchbull act towards you?
 - What do you do next?
- Independently, write a diary account of what happened at school that day.
- In groups, think of a new situation at school in which Miss Trunchbull intimidates the students. This time, perhaps the children get their own back!
- Role play the scene.
- Write a new scene detailing this event.

