

Assessment

SECTION

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Assessment advice

In the Read and Respond series of books, children carry out a range of activities that exercise their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Assessment should be an on-going process, recording progress and highlighting areas which need further practice and improvement.

You should begin each lesson by explaining the learning objective behind the activities, and where possible link to other literacy work and to other subjects in the curriculum. *Why the Whales Came* is a rich resource for vocabulary, and extracts can be used to test children's spelling and comprehension of unfamiliar words.

Assessment can be based on observation of individual, paired and group work as well as written work. The children should also be encouraged to assess their own work, and that of

writing partners or groups, against the objectives set and suggest ways of improving it.

Children can also be encouraged to create their own assessment activities. For example, they could work in two groups to create their own true or false or multiple choice quizzes about the novel, and challenge each other for the correct answers. They could select short quotes by different characters and challenge the other group to identify the character speaking, or they could devise their own spelling tests based on topics (for example, words to do with coastal scenery) or parts of speech (such as adjectives), using words chosen from the text.

Photocopiable page 32 encourages the children to reflect on the novel and its themes and it can also be used as an assessment activity.

Book review

Assessment focus: To interrogate texts to deepen and clarify understanding and response.

What you need: Photocopiable page 32, flipchart or board, writing materials.

What to do

- Ask the children if they enjoyed *Why the Whales Came* and if so, why.
- Discuss their favourite parts of the story. Which parts did they find most exciting? Which parts had most mystery or suspense?
- What do the children think are the main themes in the story? (For example, friendship overcoming prejudice, lives affected by war, living in harmony with nature, the interdependent relationship between people and nature.) Write the children's suggestions on the board.

- If there is time, these themes can be explored in other novels by the same author and parallels identified (for example, an unusual friendship in *Kensuke's Kingdom*, or the rescue of the stranded turtle which brings about a brother's return in *The Wreck of the Zanzibar*).

- Ask the children if they think the story has a satisfactory ending and if so, why. How might the story end differently (for example, if the whales were killed) and how would this change the experience of reading the novel?

- Ask the children to work on their own to complete photocopiable page 32, using their knowledge of the story described in *Why the Whales Came*. Tell them they can expand on their answers on a separate sheet of paper if necessary. When they have finished this activity, discuss their findings as a class.