

# Talk about it

SECTION

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## Time flies

**Objective:** To understand underlying themes, causes and points of view.

**What you need:** Copies of *Tom's Midnight Garden*, photocopiable page 24.

### What to do

- A complex theme explored in the book is the nature of time. Although some of the ideas will be difficult for young readers to grasp, they can engage in open-ended enquiry.
- Initiate a discussion by asking what Tom learns about time. For example, he realises that time in the garden passes more quickly than time in the present.
- Ask: *Have you heard the expression 'Time flies when you are having fun'? Have you ever noticed*

*how slowly time passes when you are bored?*

- Distribute the quotations on photocopiable page 24 'Time flies'. Ask the children to discuss the quotations and to provide illustrative examples drawn from their experience.
- Summarise the discussion by asking: *What new ideas have you discovered about time?*

### Differentiation

**For older/more confident learners:** The children can supply their own time quotations. Ask them specifically to discuss the meaning of the more challenging quotations on the photocopiable sheet.

**For younger/less confident learners:** Discuss the less complex quotations. Mixed-ability groupings will support less confident learners. Picture books can also help to make abstract ideas more accessible.

## Geese!

**Objective:** To use a range of oral techniques to present engaging narratives.

**What you need:** Copies of *Tom's Midnight Garden*.

### What to do

- This activity should be carried out after you have read Chapter 12.
- Tell the children that they are going create a dramatic retelling of this episode from the point of view of Tom as if he is relating it to his brother Peter. Note that Tom is an observer of this event and he cannot interact with the other characters.
- Review the key facts in this incident, list them in sequence and use this as a prompt sheet.
- How does Tom think and feel about the incident? In pairs, ask the children to retell the story in the first person as if they are Tom.
- Gather the class and make a list of the characters in this chapter. What does each one think about the episode? Explain that each character can 'bear witness' to the event by explaining their own thoughts. Model this technique, emphasising the use of voice and mannerisms.
- In small groups, the children can work on

their own retellings of the story, interspersed with different characters 'bearing witness' at appropriate points in the narrative. You may need to make clear the differences between 'acting out' and speaking directly to an audience.

- Share and comment on work in progress. Ask the children to imagine what sounds are heard in this scene: commotion of the geese, dog barking. Read the paragraph beginning 'Abel stopped speaking' (p93). Highlight the contrast between noise and silence and reflect on how this aids dramatic tension. Ask the groups to add sound effects where appropriate to their retelling.
- Rehearse and perform the retellings.
- Final reflection. Ask: *How did the dramatic techniques that we used enhance our storytelling?*

### Differentiation

**For older/more confident learners:** Children could present their retellings as part of a class assembly.

**For younger/less confident learners:** Create a storyboard of the episode, annotating with dialogue and sound effects. The children can then use the storyboard to scaffold the retelling.

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