

James and the Giant Peach Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker



Overview

Learning objective

- To explore metaphors and similes in the descriptions of Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker.

Learning outcome

- A description of a new character using metaphors and similes.

Book reference

- Chapters 1 and 2.

Cross-curricular link

- Literacy, Art, Drama.

Resources

- Objects or pictures of a pig, a sponge, a witch, a cabbage.



Starter

- Read the following extract from the book aloud.
- As they listen to the descriptions, the children draw the way they imagine the characters to look and label it with quotes from the text.

“ Aunt Sponge was enormously fat and very short. She had small piggy eyes, a sunken mouth and one of those white flabby faces that looked exactly as though it had been boiled. She was like a great white soggy overboiled cabbage. Aunt Spiker, on the other hand, was lean and tall and bony, and she wore steel-rimmed spectacles that fixed on to the end of her nose with a clip. She had a screeching voice and long wet narrow lips, and whenever she got angry or excited, little flecks of spit

James and the Giant Peach - Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker cont.

“ would come shooting out of her mouth as she talked. And there they sat, these two ghastly hags, sipping their drinks, and every now and again screaming at James to chop faster and faster. They also talked about themselves, each one saying how beautiful she thought she was.

Main teaching activity

- Show the students a picture of a spike.
- As a class, create a mindmap of associative words around the picture, using these questions:
 - What can a spike do?
 - Where might we see spikes?
 - How would you feel if you saw this spike in front of you?
- What might the spike tell us about the type of person Aunt Spiker is?
- Show objects or pictures of a pig, a sponge, a witch/hag and a cabbage to continue the discussion.
- Elicit more ideas associated with each word to add more dimensions to the discussion; for example, pigs are greedy; an overboiled cabbage wouldn't smell very nice; witches/hags cast spells on people.
- Pairs could be allocated one picture each and then feedback ideas.

Group or independent activity

- Working in pairs, the children create another awful aunt for James, following these questions:
 - If the aunt was an animal, what animal would she be? Why?
 - If the aunt was a vegetable, what vegetable would she be? Why?
 - If the aunt was a thing, what thing would she be? Why?
 - What does she do and what does she talk about? Why?
 - What is the aunt's name? (you could use one of your above answers to help you) Explain your answer.
- Independently, the children draw a picture of the new Aunt and write some words to describe her around the picture.



James and the Giant Peach - Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker cont.

Plenary

- Pairs present their aunts to the rest of the class.

Other activities

- The awful aunts are put in a hotseat in turn. The rest of the class ask the hotseated aunt questions in order to find out more about their character.
- The class vote for the most awful aunt.
- Read to the end of Chapter 2, looking at the dialogue and the way Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker speak to James ("you disgusting little worm".) In groups of 3 or 4, the children role play a continuation of the scene. This could show Aunt Spiker, Aunt Sponge and James and could also include the new aunt.

