

## VARIATIONS ON HOT-SEATING Lorraine Harrison ©

### The traditional version

Traditionally hot -seating refers to the strategy of asking one person, to sit on a chair known as the hot-seat, which is positioned at the front of the class. When this person sits in the hot-seat they take on the role of a specified character from a text. The group then asks this character questions relating to events and to other characters in the text.

### Other Variations

- **A few pupils sit at the front to represent a number of different characters** from the same text. These characters are hot-seated together. Decide beforehand whether each character should be allowed to respond to what the other characters are saying during the hot-seating;
- **A group** of pupils sit at the front of the class to represent **one character**;
- Whenever one pupil speaks they represent the **voice** of the selected character.;
- **Several pupils can be hot-seated** in role as people associated with a central character or characters, such as their relatives, friends, fellow pupils or colleagues, teachers, neighbours or eye-witnesses to an event in the text;
- **Half the class can hot seat the other half** in role as a group with some information about the central character. For example, half the class can devise questions as reporters, who are interviewing the other half in role as pupils who attend the same school as the central character. The teacher then acts as chair to the proceedings;

- **During the reading of a text, groups of pupils are allocated a character.** The teacher interrupts the reading at significant points to ask each group to respond and answer questions from the perspective of their character;
- **FS/Y1, 2, 3** A few pupils are given dolls, toys or **puppets** to represent the main characters. The teacher reads the story to the class, stopping at appropriate points to ask one of the puppets a question. The pupil holding the puppet is asked to answer on the puppet's behalf. Other children are then encouraged to ask the puppet another question.

## **Questioning**

### **Using a Role on the Wall strategy to prepare for questioning (Optional)**

Before the pupils consider their questions for the hot-seating, draw an outline of the character on a flipchart or board, or alternatively, draw a circle containing the name of the character or group of characters who are to be hot-seated. Leave some space outside the outline or circle. If appropriate, access prior learning by asking pupils what they already **know** about the character(s) from the text and record these responses inside the outline or circle. Then ask them what they **think** about the character at this moment in time and record these outside the outline or circle using temporary post its.

Return to this outline after the hot -seating. Remind pupils what they said they knew about the character(s) from the text and ask them what they now **know** and **think** about the character(s) as a result of the hot-seating. Record these new facts and views on the outline if appropriate and then compare the two views about the role(s) on the wall.

## **Perspectives**

During the hot-seating the class can ask questions:

- as themselves;
- in role as an interested party, such as reporters or investigators;
- in roles as minor characters within the text;

## **Organisation**

- Pupils can ask questions spontaneously;
- Pupils can work in pairs and be allowed time to devise 3-5 questions before the hot-seating;
- The whole class can work out the first few questions and allocate these to individual pupils to ask during the hot-seating;
- The teacher can prepare the first few questions beforehand and then write them on cards which will be given to individual pupils to read out during the hot-seating;
- Before the hot-seating begins, decide which pupils will ask the first few questions and agree on hands up or another signal to indicate a desire to ask a question.

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