



Fiction

Oxford Level II Pack A

Dangerous Trainers

Author: Susan Gates

Range: Mystery story

Theme: Imagining things

Teaching Notes author: Thelma Page

Synopsis

A spooky story in which trainers come to life at night. Do the trainers really go out alone at night or is someone having a bad dream?

Group or guided reading

Introducing the book

- Read the title and look at the picture on the cover. Ask: *Do the trainers look dangerous? How has the artist done that?*
- Read the blurb on the back cover. *What do you notice about this story? Who is the narrator? Talk about stories that are written in the first person. How are they different from other stories?*
- Look through the pictures and decide which character is the narrator and which is the big brother.

Strategy check

- Read the first page together. *How can we tell from this page that this is a first person account?*
- Ask the children what else they notice about this story (written in the present tense).
- *How would the first two sentences sound if they were written in the past tense? Turn to any page at random to see if the whole story is written in the present tense. How can the children tell?*

Independent reading

Focus: Explain to the children that you want them to think about the following question while they are reading independently: *Do the trainers really come to life or not?*

- Ask the children to read the story independently while individuals read aloud to you.
- Notice whether children become engrossed in reading or are easily distracted from the story. Praise children for concentrating well.
- When the children are reading aloud, ask them to point out any phrases that make the trainers sound dangerous.

Returning and responding to the text

- Ask the children whether they began to believe that the trainers were dangerous. *How did the author make them sound menacing?*
- Ask the children to find sentences and phrases that make the trainers sound dangerous, e.g. pages 9 and 18, pages 21–22.
- *How does writing in the first person make everything sound more frightening? Does it make you feel it might be happening to you?*

Fiction

- How does writing in the present tense make a difference? Does it make you feel it is happening now?
- Change one section into the past tense, e.g. page 9. Does it sound less scary?
- Ask the children whether the narrator was a girl or a boy and to show you the page where they found this out (page 26).
- Do you think the trainers were really dangerous, or was it a dream? Ask the children to find the place in the story that helped them make up their minds.
- Find 'carnivorous' on page 31. What does it mean? What does it make you feel about the trainers?
- Ask the children to say what they thought about the book and the way it is written. Did it hold their attention? Did they want to get to the end? Would they tell someone else they should read it?

Speaking and listening activities

- Ask the children to sit in a circle so they can speak in turn.
- Ask them to decide whether *Dangerous Trainers* was exciting or not and give reasons for their views. Encourage them to refer to incidents in the text that support their opinions.
- Ask them to explain whether it was a dream, or a story about trainers that really did come to life. Again ask the children to give reasons for their opinions and to refer back to the story to find the evidence.
- How did the author make the story sound exciting? Can you think of any examples?

Further reading activities

- Ask the children to find out how Susan Gates got the idea for this story by reading 'About the author'.
- You could read *Waiting for Goldie* by Susan Gates (TreeTops Level 13) to the class, or ask more able readers to read it independently. Ask them to say whether they think it is more or less exciting than *Dangerous Trainers*.

Suggestions for using ICT

- The children can find reviews of other books by Susan Gates by searching the Internet.
- Stimulate the children's appetite to read more books by Susan Gates by finding out from the internet the titles of other books she has written. Ensure that the children only have access to child-friendly sites.

Writing activities

- Ask the children to write a review of *Dangerous Trainers* for children in their class or a parallel class.
- Talk in general about what the children liked about the book, asking them to find and reread some of the incidents. Do they notice any strong verbs, adjectives or imagery that help to make that incident memorable? e.g. 'squeeze, like purple toothpaste' on page 18; 'tied up like an Egyptian mummy' on page 24; 'carnivorous' on page 21.
- Discuss the information that needs to be included in the review. With the children make a list of headings, e.g. 'Title'; 'Author'; 'Setting'; 'What the story is about'; 'The best part'; 'Why you will want to read it'.
- Remind the children to give examples of the best bits to encourage someone else to read the book.

Oxford
OWL

For teachers

Helping you with free eBooks, inspirational resources, advice and support

For parents

Helping your child's learning with free eBooks, essential tips and fun activities



www.oxfordowl.co.uk