



Fiction

Oxford Level 12 Pack A

Snooty Prune

Author: Pippa Goodhart

Range: School story

Theme: Friendship

Teaching Notes authors: Thelma Page and Gill Howell

Synopsis

Prunella goes to a new school and hates it when she is called 'Prune' for short. No one wants to be friends with her, so she decides to have a pen friend instead.

Group or guided reading

Introducing the book

- Look at the picture on the front cover and read the blurb on the back. Ask: *Would you like to be called 'Prune'? What would be a nicer way to shorten Prunella's name?*
- Talk about what 'snooty' means.
- *Has anyone had to change schools? What was it like? Was it easy to make new friends?*
- *What is a pen friend? Does anyone have a pen friend?*

Strategy check

- Look through the book. Talk about the presentation and illustrations.
- Turn to page 25. Find the words 'orphan' and 'orphanage'. Read the context to find out what the words mean.
- Find the word 'adopted'. *What does this word mean?* Use a dictionary to check the meanings.

Independent reading

Focus: Explain that you want the children to think about this question while reading: *What can you find out about the two main characters?*

- Ask the children to read the story independently.
- When a child has read aloud to you, ask questions about Prunella and Beth to find out what impression they are forming of the two characters.
- In later chapters ask questions to find out if the children understand why Beth and Prunella are both making up things about their lives.

Returning and responding to the text

- Ask the children to say what they found out about Prunella's character. Ask them to find the part of the story that illustrates this.
- Ask the children to turn to page 4. *Why did the other children think Prunella was snooty? Was it Prunella's fault?*



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- Find page 16. Read the beginning of the letter aloud. *Why didn't Prunella tell the truth?*
- *Did Prunella have a good imagination?* (pages 16–18)
- On page 36, help the children to decide what the weather was like. *Do you think Prunella was brave to go out in the dark and wet?*
- Prompt the children to find out why Prunella told lies about herself on page 44. *Do you understand why Prunella made up a different life for herself?*
- Encourage the children to do the same with Beth.

Speaking and listening activities

- Suppose that Prunella had told her teacher that Beth was being unkind to her. Ask the children to imagine that the teacher got Beth and Prunella together to sort it out.
- *How could the teacher make it easier for them to talk without being angry with each other?* Begin by asking the children whether Prunella was right to tell someone she was being bullied. *Do bullies rely on people not telling tales so that nothing happens to stop it?*
- *Do you think Beth was a bully? Do you think she was usually as unkind as this?*
- Ask two children to be Beth and Prunella. Encourage each child to put their own point of view without getting angry.
- Ask the class to suggest ways to resolve the problem.

Further reading activities

- Look at page 7 together and find the name of the lady who lived across the road. *Why do you think the author chose this name?*
- Ask the children to work in pairs to invent names for people that would sound like their characters, and make a list, e.g. Mr Smiley – who is always happy; Miss Faint – who is always ill, etc.
- Suggest that children read another book by Pippa Goodhart, e.g. *Hamper's Great Escape* (TreeTops Level 12).

Suggestions for using ICT

- Ask the children to use a word-processing program to learn how to set out letters with the address and date at the top. Set up a pen friendship with children from another school and encourage the children to type and post their letters.
- Children could read about Pippa Goodhart and other books she has written on the internet. Ensure that they only have access to child-friendly sites.

Writing activities

- Look at the letter on pages 16 and 17 with the children. *Where does the first paragraph begin and end? What is this paragraph about?*
- Look at the next two paragraphs in a similar way. Turn to page 18. *What are the last two paragraphs about?*
- Ask the children to plan five similar paragraphs about themselves, or an invented version of themselves. They should make a note of what they will write in each paragraph.



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- Ask the children to write the descriptions of themselves and their families, real or imaginary. Remind them to begin a new paragraph when the subject changes.
- Display the descriptions as excellent examples of how to use paragraphs in writing.

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