



Sinister Stories Lesson 1

Teaching Ideas

Learning Objective: To form first impressions of character and plot in *Three Times Is a Sentence*.

Success Criteria:

- To read and understand a short story.
- To predict the ending of the story.
- To infer elements of character from the text.

Context: This is part of the Sinister Stories mini-scheme of work.

This is a print-free resource! Although Activity Sheets and other resources are included in this pack, it is possible to follow the entire lesson using just the PowerPoint, to eliminate the need for photocopying.

Starter

Shivers down Your Spine!

To introduce the theme of this scheme, it can be useful to ask students what they find spooky or scary. This works well as a Snowball activity: students write their ideas on a piece of sugar paper in a group, then when given a signal by the teacher, screw up their paper into a 'snowball' and throw it to another team. They then unscrew their new piece of paper, read and add to it, and so on.

Main Activities

Three Times Is a Sentence

Students could now read the beginning of the short story [Three Times Is a Sentence](#), up to the words 'complete nutter'. What are their first impressions of Dan and the homeless guy? This task could be carried out in mixed ability groups, with higher ability students supporting lower ability peers to fill in character silhouettes with their ideas ([Character Outlines](#) are available in this pack if desired.)

Make a Prediction

Students now read up to 'I wonder where he's gone?'. Can they make a prediction about what will happen next? There are [Prediction Prompt Cards](#) to help lower ability students with this activity (the prompts are also available on the PowerPoint). As a mini-plenary to conclude this activity, students could then speculate about what 'three times is a sentence' means.

The Ending

Finally, students could read up the end of the story, then return to their character outlines from earlier in the lesson. Can they add to these at all?

Plenary

To summarise their first impressions of the story, students could write a blurb for it. There is a [Book Blurb Activity Sheet](#) available, or this could simply be completed in books. There are [Blurb Keywords](#) available to support lower ability students (these words are also available on the PowerPoint). As an extension or homework activity, students could then design a cover for the story – this would make a good display resource.

