

Gone to Sea

Key

Pre-reading

- 1.1 William was at the age when children start walking (perhaps 12 months)
- 1.2 He couldn't walk like the rest of his family

2 Allow students time to reflect (and perhaps articulate) what they think his brothers might have done before letting them read the paragraph.

2.1 They were not unfeeling or cruel.

2.2 Any reasonable answer will do as this question asks an opinion, not for factual information. For the record, in the story William feels increasingly withdrawn and isolated.

3.1 / 3.2 Again the students are being asked to speculate and form their own opinions, so there are no right or wrong answers. For the record, in the story the teachers treated him as if he was stupid and the children made merciless fun of him.

3.3 Implies that the story actually happens after that summer, so 'that last summer' could refer to events leading up to the time of the narrative. It could also imply that it was William's last summer (at school, of existence etc)

4. There are no right or wrong answers for this section. Students are being asked to create stories given the information they have about William, and by using their imaginations. Do not point this out, but the title of the story is a good clue as to how things might turn out in the story written by Michael Morpurgo. Get students to work in pairs or small groups to devise a story which should not be written down. The purpose of the activity is to tell stories to each other. You could make this into a competition for the most imaginative, most coherent, most well told, most believable, funniest, saddest etc story. By the end of this activity the students should be inquisitive about the Morpurgo story and want to compare their story with his.

Context

The context section takes attitudes towards disability as its main theme.

1. Students are asked to survey their own environment to see how 'friendly' it is to people with disabilities. If there are students with disabilities in the group you may want to discuss with them beforehand if they want to play a leading or an advisory role in this activity. If there is knowledge amongst the students of other physical disabilities then you might consider including these in the survey.

Things to look out for:

Wheelchair users: general access – steps and stairs, width of doors, which way doors open. Ramps, or lack of them. Toilet facilities. Height of work surfaces etc.

More information: <http://www.greatbritishmobility.com/>

Visually impaired: tops and bottom of stairs (how do they know they are there?); signs to rooms etc; how much essential information is entirely visual? Research Braille signs etc
More information:

<http://www.birminghamfocus.org.uk/html/display.php/id/43/highlight/on>

Impaired hearing: what aids exist for deaf people and are there any in the school? How much of the school day relies on ability to listen with ease? Are fire alarms etc backed up with flashing lights?

More information:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/HomeAndHousingOptions/YourHome/DG10029422>

2. Try it yourself.

Wordwork

Glossary

Students should note that the descriptions in this glossary are correct for this story but may vary in other situations. Encourage them not to use the glossary during the first reading as this spoils the enjoyment. It is better to 'bleep' over unknown words than struggle to find their meaning. Checking meanings should be left for a subsequent reading or listening.

Language in Use

Sam had sat up and told him that he should swim. He had clambered down towards William and said that if he had had a foot like William's he would swim. He told William that he'd be fine in the water and thought he would swim with the seals. He had smiled and ruffled William's hair.