

MR MAGLUMP

Activity – Meeting your characters

When you begin to write a story, you may not even know who your characters are. Maybe you just have an idea of where your story is set, or just one character in your mind. To help you discover who lives in your story, take a walk through your imagination and meet whatever comes your way.

When I started writing *Mr Maglump*, (and before I even imagined up Mr Maglump himself), in my imagination, I arrived on Chipson Street. I saw a street of colourful houses, with one house grey and very sad looking.

Even though this walk was just inside my imagination, along the way I heard the sounds of a rather noisy house, which turned out to be the home of the Robin family. I knew this family was a kind family, but quite scruffy and a little bit argumentative. And slowly, they introduced themselves.

I then imagined them sat around their dinner table, and soon ‘discovered’ that they would regularly invite their neighbours round for dinner. But...there was one neighbour they had never invited for dinner.

I still didn’t know who this character was, but I discovered his name when I imagined one of the Robin children writing an invitation to him, ‘Dear Mr Maglump...’

Timmy then took the invitation to his house and delivered it, and that's when I saw him for the first time. A great big man with a green coat and hat, filling his doorway and grumbling under his great big mustache. And that's when I realised I had a story to tell.

Now Meet Your Own Characters

Here are some ideas to help you discover what characters are hiding inside your own imagination. Take a little journey into an imagined world and you may well find a whole story waiting to be told! What'll help you remember what you find in there is a trusty notebook and a pen. When you arrive in your imagined location, write down a few things about what you see and what you do there. This will help you if you want to write a story based in that world.

- Imagine a place (it can be simple or *extraordinary*...)
- Take a walk around it...
- If you can see anybody there, what do they look like?
- Where do they live?
- How old are they?
- Do they see you?
- Are they happy to see you?
- Do they have a family?
- Who else do they know?
- Are there other people around?
- Is everything perfect?
- If not...what is wrong?
- Is there something to find out?
- Is there someone with a secret?
- Do the other characters know about the secret?

Provocations: Now you've been on your imaginary walk to meet your characters and explore your story world, how about you try and write about it? Maybe write down what your characters say to each other, or maybe what they look like? Perhaps draw a mind-map of the world and how different areas connect.