

Wider Reading Unit

by Alison Rothwell

Compare the two short stories, 'The Signal Man' by Dickens and 'Lamb to the Slaughter' by Roald Dahl.

We are going to write a paragraph about each of the following elements of the stories. begin by making notes. It does not matter which final order you choose.

You must, however, check that you have;

- Compared the characters.
- Described the setting of each story.
- Referred to the openings and endings.
- Made some observation about language and style.
- Offered some of your own opinions.
- Used some quotations from the stories.
- Explained how each author creates suspense.

Use the following questions and suggestions to help you compose each of your paragraphs:

Opening

What is the mood at the start of each story?

Is it the same or different. Think of two words to describe the mood.

Choose some words or phrases which help to create the mood at the start, quote them and explain what effect they have.

What is the effect of the opening upon the reader?

Setting

Where is each story set?

Historically

Physically (indoors, on a moor, in another country)

Are there any similarities or contrasts

Theme

What is the theme of each story?

What point do you think the author wanted to make?

Are the two stories similar?

Characters

Describe the main characters in each story.

Find one or two quotations which show what they are like.

Are any of them alike?

Which characters do you like/dislike. Give reasons.

Do you find any of the character particularly believable or unrealistic. Say why.

Style

What is typical of each authors' style of language...this means;

Do they use lots of description? (simile, metaphors?)

Do they use a lot of direct speech, no direct speech or a mixture of direct and reported speech.

Do they tell the story in first or third person. What is the effect of this.

Compare the authors and find some quotation to support your answer.

Suspense

There is some suspense in both stories... how does the author create the suspense?

When does it begin? What events add to it?

When does it end?

Plot

Are any features of the plot the same.... does the same event or incident occur in each story?
E.g. someone dies, finds something, tells a lie etc..

If there are some similarities, in what ways do they differ... can you explain why?

Ending

Both stories have a twist in the tail (tale)

What is the twist?

What did you expect would happen?

What is the effect on the reader when the story doesn't end in the way that you expect it to?

Your Opinion

Overall which do you think was the best story...why?