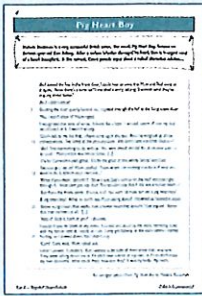


Pig Heart Boy



Question Book:

Year 6, pages 4-5

Author / Source:

Malorie Blackman

Genre:

Fiction — novel extract

Cross-curricular links:

- PSHE (medical ethics)
- Science (the heart)
- PE (exercise and heart rate)
- Maths (line graphs)

Introduction

Malorie Blackman has written numerous novels for children and young adults. Her novels often use science fiction to tackle complex ethical issues. *Pig Heart Boy* explores the issues that could arise from the use of pig organs for human transplants. Before pupils read the extract, make sure they are aware that the transplantation of whole organs from pigs to humans is not currently possible. You may also want to explain that heart valves from pigs and cows can be used to replace damaged human heart valves, and that scientists in the USA are attempting to grow human organs in pigs for transplantation.

Answers

1. "Now there's a surprise!" OR "I wonder what they're arguing about today."
2. "It burnt like a laser"
3. E.g. To show that Cam's mum stressed those words when she spoke. It also helps to emphasise that she's angry with Cam's dad for making up his mind about the pig heart treatment without asking her.
4. E.g. The dialogue makes the extract feel realistic. It also helps the reader to understand the characters better because it shows how Cam's parents feel about the situation.
5. Any appropriate answer. E.g. He feels angry with his parents for making decisions about his treatment without asking him first. He might also feel upset that his parents have been arguing.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because Cam's own heart doesn't work properly — he can't even run all the way up the stairs. If he has the transplant then he might be able to lead a more normal life. OR E.g. No, I think that Cam should wait for a human heart because using a pig's heart might be more likely to have complications, and Cam's mum says that it would "deform" him.

Extra Activities

- As a class, discuss the use of direct speech in this extract. Do pupils enjoy reading texts that use a lot of direct speech? Get pupils to underline all the words that Blackman uses instead of "said". How many other words can they think of that they could use instead of "said"?
- Ask pupils to write a short dialogue between two friends who have fallen out. Encourage them to use the techniques identified in the class discussion to make their dialogue interesting and to avoid repetition.
- Hold a class debate about the idea of using animal organs to treat people who need organ transplants.
- Explain to the class how blood circulates between the heart, the lungs and the rest of the body. Give pupils a diagram of the heart and challenge them to find out the names of the different chambers and blood vessels. Can they add arrows to show the circulation of blood around the heart?
- Get pupils to measure their resting heart rate, then give them a list of activities, such as star jumps, running on the spot and balancing on one leg. Ask pupils to do each activity for one minute and measure their heart rate immediately afterwards, one minute later and two minutes later. They should then draw line graphs to show how each activity affected their heart rate.