

CARTOON KID DISCUSSION TOPICS



Once all the children in the class have had a chance to read Jeremy Strong's **CARTOON KID**, help them to explore some of its themes by using these five talking points as a base.

1 Superheroes

As Mr Butternut says, all children can be superheroes! Ask children what they thought of the Cartoon Kid superhero, and see which other characters they liked. Which other superheroes can they name from other books, and which are their favourites? And what makes a good superhero? What are the special qualities and looks that they need? Why do they think superheroes are so popular in books, films and TV programmes?

2 Bullying

Casper and Pete have to deal with two sets of bullies – the Vampire Twins and Masher McNeer and his friends. The stories around these events are funny, but there are some serious messages too. Ask children to discuss how Casper and Pete deal with bullying, using humour, persuasion and smart thinking rather than fighting back. How would children respond if they found themselves in the same position? Use this opportunity to outline the school's policy on bullying. Emphasise how seriously the school takes the issue, and remind children where they can go for help if they are being bullied.

3 Starting a new class

Casper and his friends are starting a new school year and meeting a new teacher for the first time. Talk to children about their own experiences of that. Did they feel nervous like Casper does in the first few pages of the book? How do the feelings of the characters compare to their own? How did they cope with starting a new class, and what advice would they give to children younger than themselves?

4 Funny books

What parts of the book made the children laugh? And why? Get children to read out their favourite bits and explain what they liked about them. Ask what other funny books children have read recently, and suggest some other titles for them to try. Go to www.jeremyststrong.co.uk to see all his books, and look at the books nominated for the Roald Dahl Funny Prize at www.booktrust.org.uk for more ideas.

5 Cartoons in books

Children love books with drawings, and reluctant or hesitant readers often find that breaking up the story with cartoons makes them more accessible and readable than text-only books. Ask children what they thought of the drawings in **CARTOON KID**. Did they prefer the writing or the drawings? How do the two things work together in the book? Do the sketches make the book easier to read? Do children like to see drawings of the characters in the book, or do they prefer to imagine what they look like in their heads?

