

Teaching notes

This task could be used for creative writing or to encourage backing up arguments with clear reasoning.

Give students parts of the story bit by bit, asking them to come up with ideas for possible explanations for the first part of the story.

Next, share explanations or swap these around the class to prompt arguments which counter the explanations given.

Examples are shown to aid students' understanding and to prompt creative and logical thinking skills.

Part One

One day, the King woke up and saw a man slumped on top of a very tall wall in the garden. The man was asleep. The King asked all of his top advisors to explain how the man got there. The advisors were all very competitive. They knew the King wanted to sack some of them to save money. He needed some money to buy himself a new wig. They wanted to come up with the best possible explanation for the sleeping man sitting on the wall.

Example explanation:

'The man was picking apples in the orchard when a giant eagle flew down and picked him up in its beak. They flew all night, until the man fell asleep from nervous exhaustion. His snoring was so annoying that the eagle dumped him on the wall and flew away.'

Part Two

When the King had heard all the explanations, he was very confused. They were all excellent ideas. He said that he would give a bag of gold coins to the advisor who could prove that the other explanations were wrong.

Example counter argument:

'This is impossible, your majesty. It is the wrong time of year for apples, and there are no orchards anywhere in the kingdom. Furthermore, eagles are allergic to orchards, and would never willingly go near one. The idea that an eagle, annoyed by snoring, would bother to gently set the man down on a wall is ridiculous! The eagle would drop him straight away! But in any case, it is common knowledge that eagles love the sound of snoring, which is why they come and sit on the roofs of houses at night when people are asleep.'

Which advisor deserves to win the King's gold coins?

