

The Stone Age by Marcia Williams - Pop up festival

Pre-visit task

Marcia Williams sent us two video clips to help us prepare for her visit. In the first, she introduced herself and her book - The Stone Age. She set the class a task in her second clip. Based on a chapter of their choice from the book, the class created their own comic strip. The majority of the class decided to think about either how man discovered fire or how wolves became dogs.

Live event

The session started with the children sharing their comic strips of the stone age with Marcia. The children were pleased to be able to share their tasks and gain feedback from the author.

Coincidentally, Marcia has previously lived in Nigeria and been to the city of Benin, a topic we have been studying this term in year 6. Marcia was more than happy to share her experiences and tales about when she lived in Nigeria as a child. The children were shown various artefacts and items from Benin/Nigeria. The children were pleased to see a bronze statue just like the ones they have been reading about!

The class had prepared many questions asking how modern-day Nigeria operates compared to England. It was surprising to some to be told the cities were very similar to England with regards to infrastructure and technology. However, out in the wilderness there is a lot of poverty still. The schools out of the towns are known as bush schools. They have little equipment and all students are taught in one class, regardless of age.

Marcia told the class how she first started getting into writing and comic strip drawing. During her time at boarding school she was made to write letters home and she hated it. Therefore, she took photographs of her week instead to show her parents. Using these she started to add descriptions and speech bubbles. Slowly she realised it was in the style of a comic strip and continued this style throughout childhood with letters to family and friends.

The children asked Marcia about being an author and how it works going from an idea to publishing a book. Marcia told the children about all the people and roles involved in

getting a book published and how the money is shared. She also shared the feeling of being able to finally publish her first book - how lucky, excited and relieved she felt.

Marcia helped the children to understand why it is important and helpful to go back over and improve the first draft. She showed empathy and shared experiences of how drafts were turned down by an editor. She recommended going back after a period of time and this allows you to see ways to improve as you are less possessive of the work.

Marcia had prepared a fun quiz for the class based on the stone age. They had to answer multiple choice questions and be the first to stand or put hands up. The winner, won a signed book of their choice from the authors vast collection! An extremely nice touch from Marcia which had the class fully engaged and excited about the quiz and sharing what they had learnt from the book.

The children really enjoyed the session and learnt a lot about the stone age, Nigeria and what it is like to be an author-illustrator. The children's own work is of a very high standard, showing how much they were inspired by this event.