# Section 9.5

Predicting what might happen next

Why is this important?

Children need to learn to predict in order to problem-solve and decide what, in all probability, is going to happen next. This involves analysing and synthesising information.

What to do

- Read a story together. This might be a fairy story, a book from the library, school reading book or story in a child's magazine.
- Read a few pages to introduce the characters.
- At key places, stop and before you turn the page, ask: 'What do you think might happen next?'
- The child may need more guidance and more direct questions (e.g. when reading 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', you could ask 'Whose house do you think she will find?' After she's eaten the porridge, ask 'What's Goldilocks going to do now?' and when the bears come home, ask 'What do you think the bears are going to find?').
- In the 'Oxford Reading Tree*' stories, there is often something 'funny' that happens on the last page. Stop before this page to ask the child what he/she thinks might happen at the end.
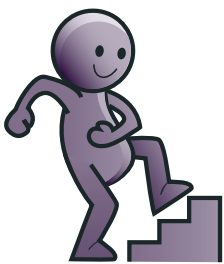
Step up

- Some fairy stories do have slightly different endings. For example, in the 'Three Little Pigs', sometimes the first two pigs get eaten and sometimes they all live together in the brick house; sometimes the wolf is burned in the fire and sometimes he just burns his bottom and runs off never to be seen again. Talk about these differences – does the child prefer one ending?
- Present a problem and think of alternative solutions (e.g. the boy can't find his shoes, what might/could he do?).

Step down

- Offer choices about what might happen next (e.g. in Goldilocks you could ask 'Do you think she's going to find a bears' house or a pigs' house?').
- Use toy materials (e.g. stand a figure by a swing and ask 'What do you think she wants to go on next?').
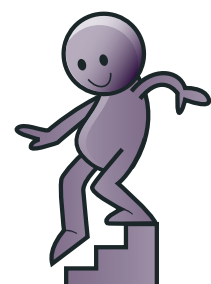
*The Oxford Reading Tree is available from Oxford University Press (www.oup.com).