

## **21. SETTING UP A *MINIMUS* READING COMPETITION**

Why not consider setting up a *Minimus* Reading Competition with other *Minimus* schools from your area?

1. In order to contact the schools in your area, please write to Mrs Diana Sparkes, 16 Leigh Road, Highfield, Southampton SO17 1EF (tel: 023 8055 6818) as she has the *Minimus* Schools' Address List. You should state in which area your own school is located, and which counties, postal districts etc, you wish to target. There are 1150 schools on the list so that it should be possible to find some schools to join in. The South-East is particularly rich in numbers, but most areas have at least several schools.
2. Once you have received the list from Diana, send a letter of invitation to these schools, enclosing a copy of the play you have chosen, from the two that Barbara Bell has written specially for such an occasion; these two are listed among the support sheets. You will need to check with your Head Teacher that the competition can be held at your school, perhaps one school afternoon, with an audience of pupils and parents. Such events are always good publicity for schools, and the press can be invited.
3. You may know some of the schools on the list and can encourage the *Minimus* teachers to enter their pupils in the competition. Otherwise, you will just have to wait for positive replies! It is suggested that each school enters not more than three teams of three/four performers. You only need to have five schools to obtain fifteen teams, sufficient for a pleasant hour's entertainment.
4. Once you have received several replies, you will need to fix a date suitable for all the schools, often a Friday afternoon is convenient. When the date is settled, you should quickly find an adjudicator. You can ask Barbara or Diana for some suggestions of names, or you may have some local contacts whom you know. Later you can send a detailed letter to your colleagues with more instructions.
5. Then you and your colleagues will need to train your teams. If you are unsure of how to pronounce the words in the accepted pronunciation of Latin, then listen to the *Minimus* Cassette, which will be a great help to you. Diana is available to give assistance on the phone!
6. The pupils derive huge pleasure from speaking the words spoken two thousand years ago by the Romans, and enter into the acting and speaking with enormous enthusiasm. The words can be spoken off by heart or read from an unmarked text. Suitable clothing may be worn, including tails and whiskers but generally no extra marks will be awarded.
7. All pupils who compete should be given a certificate for having had the pluck to compete in front of an audience. It is recommended that prizes of gold, silver and bronze medals should be awarded. These are easily available from your local trophy shop. They are not intrinsically valuable but have a definite sentimental appeal for the pupils. Each school might be invited to contribute five/ten pounds towards expenses such as the certificates and the medals, the programme and the adjudicator's travel.
8. It is suggested that members of the audience are given copies of the play to be performed, with English translation. It is usual to compile a programme with the names of the members of each team and the "batting order".
9. Make sure that there are chairs or tables for the performers if they are needed in their productions – and also for the audience. The casts should bring their own props.
10. To round off the occasion, and to make it a social event, why not provide squash/tea and biscuits for the performers and the audience after the adjudication? Such refreshments are always much appreciated!

Diana Sparkes