

## Language activities

These language activities are provided as suggestions for you to choose from and adapt to suit the needs and attainments of your particular children.

### Text level work

#### Everything looked big

*Thinking about size*

You could paint giant-sized flowers to make an area of the classroom like the garden where everything looked big. Understanding of both *In the garden* and *Kipper and the giant* depends on the concept that size is relative.

Changing the scale of your classroom through models and art work will help the children achieve this understanding.

(See also Further activities on 'Giants', page 119.)

#### A walk through a 'jungle'

*An imaginative journey*

If you have access to any flower borders or areas of grass and weeds children can imagine their own walk through the 'jungle'. Give a pair of children about a metre of string with a small piece of sticky tape at each end of it. Let them choose an area of undergrowth and lightly attach one end of the string to a fence, drainpipe or plant stem. Allow the string to drop among the plants in a wavy line. When they are happy that the string makes an interesting path – it might bridge a chasm between one plant and the next, it might be very steep in places – ask them to attach the other end to a plant stem. Now the children start at one end of the piece of string and, imagining that they are the size of an ant or a ladybird, they describe their journey. Look out for dangers – places where you might fall, places where a predator might be hiding, other creatures which may or may not be friendly. If each pair of children have a clipboard and drawing materials they can each draw half of the journey. Afterwards they can show the class the picture and describe the hazards along the way.

#### If I were a friendly giant ...

*Recording children's own ideas, using Sheet 1*

Talk about the things Kipper did to help the little people in *Kipper and the giant*. He was taller and stronger, so he was able to do difficult jobs easily. Use a Circle time to give each child the opportunity to think of something they could do to help. Some children have said: 'I would catch aeroplanes before they crashed.'; 'I would push the clouds away to let the sun shine.'; 'I would lift kittens down from trees.' Sheet 1 has space for the child to complete the sentence and to draw what they would do to help in the thought bubble. You could use the pictures for a wall display, a class book or as a contribution to a class assembly.

#### What do you look forward to?

*Discussion and a collaborative poem, using Sheet 2*

The giant probably looked forward to his holiday. The children in the stories looked forward to going to the zoo, going to the pantomime, going swimming. Use a Circle time discussion to finish the sentence 'I look forward to...'. The opposite of looking forward to something is worrying about the future. Give the children time to express anxieties by asking them to take turns to complete the sentence 'Sometimes I worry about ...'. You could record responses to both as a class poem, for example:

I look forward to  
 birthdays  
 Christmas Eve  
 seeing a rainbow  
 chips and fried egg  
 going to my nan's  
 snowy days  
 the first bite of my apple

I worry about  
 oversleeping  
 losing things  
 my hamster getting out  
 my mum being late  
 having no-one to play with  
 what will happen if it doesn't stop raining

Alternatively let each child record what they look forward to, and what they worry about on Sheet 2. These sheets make an instant class book which the children will enjoy reading.

### **A giant story**

#### *Collaborative story writing*

Talk about the story that Kipper was watching on television. What do you think the angry giant did when he was cross? If Kipper had not come to help, what could the villagers have done? In a class discussion think about three things that the giant did to annoy or frighten the villagers. What could the villagers do to stop him? Imagine that the villagers had a meeting and devised a plan. What was the plan? Did it work? Write and illustrate the story. This can be done individually or by a group. A group will need to agree which part each individual will write about, who will do the illustrations and who will make the cover. Alternatively, use the computer to type the story in large print and ask different children to illustrate each page, making a giant-sized class book.

### **An outing**

#### *Recording the children's own experiences, using Sheet 3*

If the class has been on an outing, use the story of *The outing* to make comparisons. This will also give children plenty of ideas for writing an account of the day. Did you go in a coach? Biff dropped her lunch – did anyone in your class? Nadim was noisy – did your teacher have to ask anyone not to shout? Where did you stop to go to the toilet? Wilf lost a shoe – did anyone lose anything? Did it rain on your outing? What was the weather like? Did you go to a zoo or a museum? Where did you go to? Nadim found out about dinosaurs. What did you find out about?

You could use the coach shape on Sheet 3 as a cover for the children's work, either a class book or individual accounts. There is space in the windows to draw faces of children in the class and the driver. They could also add the coach company's name and colours on the side.

### **Going swimming**

#### *Expressing and recording feelings, using Sheet 4*

Use a Circle time to complete the sentences 'The best thing about going swimming is ...' and 'The worst thing about going swimming is ...'. Use Sheet 4 to record these responses. Most children have strong feelings on the subject!

### **Underwater adventure**

#### *Co-operating to dramatize part of The treasure chest*

If any children have diving masks at home, ask them to bring them to school to help act out the story. As the children in the story could not hear each other underwater, this is a good chance to bring in mime as a means of communication. You will need four children to be Biff, Chip, Wilf and Wilma. You will also need an octopus to sit on the treasure chest and a shark! A group of six children can be sent to a corner to read the story again, then allocate roles and practise telling the story in mime. When they are ready they can perform for the class.

### **Things we do well**

#### *A speaking and listening activity, building self-esteem*

Wilma is a good swimmer, Anneena is good at playing the recorder, Nadim is clever with computers. Ask the children to think carefully before telling the class what they are good at. You might need to have some suggestions ready for the less forthcoming children. It is very important that everyone is acknowledged to be good at something. Ask each child to draw themselves in action and write the sentence 'I am good at...'. Use a wallboard to celebrate these achievements: 'Guess what our class can do!'

### **Red Planet**

#### *Thinking about colours and colour effects*

Everything was red on this planet. Would the children like to live there? What would a green planet be like? Would it be covered with green plants, have green streams and a green sky? Would it be beautiful? Fix coloured cellophane on the windows so that children can look through it, or give them colour filters to look through. How does it change everything? Ask children to imagine a landscape with shades of the same colour. They could draw or paint the picture then describe it to the class before they show it. Alternatively, children could write a description of the landscape and the creatures that live there.

### **The bully**

#### *Discussing behaviour and feelings*

Read the story *The bully* to the whole class before a Circle time. In a general discussion talk about Rosie and why the others didn't like her. Talk about being new to a class and feeling left out. What could Rosie do to make friends? In the circle let children talk about

times when someone was unkind to them. Anneena cried when Rosie pulled her hair. Has this happened to you? Ask them to finish the sentence: 'I was unhappy when ...'. This will undoubtedly lead to children bringing up past grievances (sometimes from playgroup!) but it gives you the opportunity to say 'You shouldn't have to put up with that, no wonder you were unhappy'. When everyone has contributed make it clear that bullying is not acceptable and ask the children 'What can we do when this happens?'. In the story Wilma fetched Mrs May. Tell them to fetch you, or another teacher and that telling an adult is the right thing to do.

### Letters to Father Christmas

*A letter writing activity, using Sheet 5*

Look at pages 10 and 11 of *Christmas adventure*. How have children started their letters to Father Christmas? Which do you think Father Christmas liked best? Which letters do you think he put in the dustbin? You could use the layout on Sheet 5 for children to write and illustrate their own letters. This sheet could also be used as guidelines under plain paper if you prefer. Encourage the children to think about Father Christmas reading the letters and to make them as neat and attractive as possible.

### What happened next?

*Sequencing and comprehension activities, using Sheets 6–8*

Sheets 6–8 each have a sequence of five frames plus sentences from *In the garden*, *Kipper and the giant* and *The outing*. Some of the sentences are already illustrated. There is space for the children to provide the missing pictures and to add a further sentence and picture to show what happened next. These pages may be used in a number of ways:

a) as worksheets

After reading the story the child is given the sheet to complete. He reads the sentences and draws appropriate pictures in the blank spaces. He then decides what happened next and writes the sentence and draws the picture.

b) as an assessment

Cut out the sentences and give them to the child in random order. Ask him to read each sentence aloud. Then ask him to put them in order. Finally, ask the child to tell you what happened next in the story.

c) to make a storybook

When the child has completed the illustrations and added a further sentence and picture, provide activity paper of a suitable size to fold into a book. The child can then cut out the pictures and sentences and mount them.

d) as matching material

Enlarge the sheet to A3 size on a photocopier. Ask children to illustrate the missing pictures. Mount and laminate to provide a sentence/picture matching and sequencing resource for the classroom.

### Retell the story

*Comprehension activities, using Sheets 9–11*

Sheets 9–11 provide one page each for *Land of the dinosaurs*, *Robin Hood* and *The treasure chest*. Each section has a sentence or two from the story, but the last few words are missing each time. The missing words are in random order at the bottom of the sheet. The final frame allows children to add a further sentence from the story. These pages may be used:

a) as worksheets

After reading the story ask the child to complete the sentences. He may either refer to the words at the bottom of the page, or you can cut these off and ask him to complete the sentences in his own way. In this case, the response need not match the text but should express what happened in the story.

b) as sequencing cards

Cut the page into six cards and ask the child to read each one, telling you what to write in the gaps or writing it himself. Then ask the child to put the cards in order and read them aloud to check that they make sense. He could then be asked what happened next, or what happened before the first sentence.

c) to start a book

Ask the child to complete the sentences, then cut the page into six cards. These may be mounted in order to begin a story. The child is asked to continue the story on paper of a similar size to make a book or a story board.

d) as an assessment

If the child has read the book silently or at home you could use these pages to check on fluency and understanding. Ask the child to read the page to you, putting in missing words that sound sensible. As he needs to understand the text to predict the missing words this will give an indication of confidence and competence.

## Word jigsaw

*A puzzle game involving checking for meaning, using Sheet 12*

Copy Sheet 12 for each player and cut along the lines. Place the pieces face down on the table. Players take turns to pick up a piece of the puzzle. Unwanted pieces are returned to the table. The winner is the first player to complete the jigsaw and read the text.

## The story of the lost key

*A matching and sequencing game, using Sheet 13*

Make a copy of Sheet 13 for each player in the group (maximum four). Cut out the cards and separate the pictures from the text. Place pictures face down at one end of the table and text face down at the other.

Children take turns to turn over one card from each end of the table. If the picture matches the text, the child keeps the pair. If not, the cards are replaced on the table where they were found. If a player collects the same part of the story twice he may exchange duplicate cards with another player. This must be done during a player's turn but does not replace the turn.

The winner is the first player to collect all the pairs and arrange the story in the correct sequence.

## Sentence level work

### What was it like?

*Using comparisons for descriptions, using Sheet 14*

*In the garden* uses similes to describe the feeling of being very small. After reading the story, use Sheet 14 and ask the children to complete the first two sentences by referring to the book. The third sentence is for the children to complete themselves: 'The cat looked like ...'. After finishing the sentences, there is space for the children to draw the three pictures.

### Matching adjectives

*Practising use of adjectives, using Sheets 15 and 16*

Sheet 15 provides a set of 12 adjectives on individual word cards. Sheet 16 provides a similar set of matching nouns. Cut the word cards out and mount each set of 12 on a different colour card. Spread out all the cards face down on the table top. Between two and four children take turns to pick up one card of each of the two colours and read the two words. Encourage them to correct themselves if they read the words in the

wrong order, for example, house, red. Everyone then decides whether this is an acceptable combination. Is it possible to have a red house? If so, the player keeps the cards. If not, they are returned to the table face down. The winner is the player with most pairs when all the reasonable pairings have been made.

### Another point of view

*Comprehension and punctuation activities, using Sheets 17–20*

Sheets 17–20 tell parts of four of the *More Owls* Stage 6 stories from a character's point of view. The child reads each sentence and decides which of two words is appropriate. Each time the word is the last in the sentence and the child is asked to write the word and check that a full stop has been used.

These pages could also be used to continue to discuss the story from the character's point of view. You could consider feelings and what happened next.

### Who was it?

*Capital letters for names, using Sheets 21–24*

Sheets 21 and 22 have sentences from *A fright in the night* and *Rotten apples*. Sheets 23 and 24 have sentences from *The bully* and *The jigsaw puzzle*. All the names of the characters are missing. The child reads the sentences and recalls the character or refers back to the text to fill the gap. These sheets are intended to review the child's grasp of what happened, at the same time reinforcing the use of capital letters to start names.

### Exclamations!

*Developing awareness of punctuation*

*Rotten apples* uses exclamation marks frequently. You could use this story to show how exclamation marks affect the tone of the reader. After reading the story you could ask individual children to start at the beginning and spot exclamation marks. Ask them to read the sentence as if they were the person: Biff saying 'Yuk!', Kipper saying 'Come and see this!', the children shouting 'Help!'.

### Half sentences

*Capital letters and full stops in sentences, using Sheets 25–28*

Sheets 25–28 provide one page for four of the stories in *More Owls* Stage 7. The child is asked to match two parts of a sentence so that it makes sense. There is space

to write the completed sentences and illustrate one of them. The child checks that each sentence has a capital letter and a full stop.

## Word level work: Word recognition

### 'Large and small'

#### *Ordering and labelling activity*

Make a collection of objects with a range of sizes: for example, detergent packs from trial size to economy size; shampoo containers from sample size to family size; socks from a baby's to a large man's football sock; T shirts from a baby size to XXL; stones from a piece of gravel to a rock. Ask the children to put each set in order and to think of names to label each object. Sometimes the manufacturers will have devised their own size systems – words or letters or numbers. Discuss these with the children and ask what each one means. Decide how to label each object and ask the children to write or type labels. You could use the display as a matching activity, collecting up the labels each day and asking a child to match them.

### Large and small lists

#### *Enhancing vocabulary*

Use the size words you have discovered on products to begin lists of words meaning large and words meaning small. If you write each word on a separate card, children could discuss their meanings and try to put them in order, for example, *big, huge, enormous, massive, gigantic, mammoth, immense; small, tiny, miniature, microscopic*. You might like to increase the visual impact by writing the large words in large or very large print and the small words in tiny writing.

### Signposts

#### *Reading and writing signs*

Look at the signposts in *Kipper and the giant*. Notice that they were different heights. Why was that? Think about signposts which would be useful in school and in the classroom. What should they say? Where should they be placed? At what height? How big should the writing be? Should the writing be done carefully? Why? Are the signs for children to read, or adults to read?

### What does it mean?

#### *Words can have two meanings*

In *Rotten apples* Harry Smith uses a word that sounds like another to make a joke. 'I've got some birds going cheap,' and Biff and Chip laughed. Can the children explain the joke? Children reading this story often miss the joke. They have not discovered that some words have other meanings. Ask a child to explain to the others that 'cheap' could also be 'cheep'. Can they explain why the question 'Are you a little hoarse?' could have two meanings? Harry Smith held the reins. What other word sounds the same as 'reins'? Would that word make sense in the story?

### A memory game

#### *Practice using short-term memory, using*

#### *Sheets 29 and 30*

Ask children to look at the picture of the magpie's nest on Sheet 29 for one minute. Give them a copy of Sheet 30 and ask them to draw one thing, or write the words, in each square. Can they remember all 12 objects?

### The go-kart game

#### *Reading without pictorial support, using Sheets 31, 32 and rules on Sheet 36*

Use the track on Sheet 31 and the cards on Sheet 32, for a game based on *The go-kart race*. You might like to enlarge the track to A3 size. The cards give the children practice in reading words introduced in the story without support from the pictures. The rules of the game are on Sheet 36.

### The creature game

#### *Recognizing number words, using Sheet 33 and rules on Sheet 36*

Copy Sheet 33 and cut up into 12 cards, for a game based on *Red Planet*. Spread the cards face down on the table. Each child needs a pencil and paper ready to draw creatures. This game encourages children to remember the location of a card they need. The rules of the game are on Sheet 36.

### Word hunt in the jungle

#### *Recognizing words out of context, using Sheet 34 and rules on Sheet 36*

This is a game based on *Lost in the jungle*, which gives children practice in reading words outside the context of a story. Each player needs a copy of Sheet 34. The rules of the game are on Sheet 36.

## Word level work: Graphic knowledge

### Small, smaller, smallest

*Awareness of word families*

When you are talking about words for sizes you could collect some word families. If you use words from the 'Large and small lists' (see page 79) the children will be able to check each one to find out whether the pattern applies. Some words will sound funny and the children will know that 'enormouser' cannot be a word.

### Go-ing swimm-ing!

*Patterns in verb endings, using Sheet 35*

Look at the story of *The treasure chest* and talk about going swimming. Ask the children to think of all the things they do when they go swimming. Collect words ending in '-ing', for example, *swimming, diving, floating, sinking, splashing, stretching, blinking, laughing, crying, shouting, climbing in, climbing out, getting wet, getting dry, feeling cold, feeling warm*. From the phrases the children suggest you could create a poem, like this:

Getting in,  
getting wet,  
feeling cold.  
Beginning,  
pushing,  
swimming.  
Suddenly I'm  
floating!  
Laughing,  
splashing,  
having fun  
at the pool!

Ask them to spot all the '-ing' words in the poem. You could ask the children to illustrate the 'Go-ing swimm-ing' words on Sheet 35 and suggest two more.

Can they now use these words to make up a list poem of their own?

### Dino-saurs

*Awareness of word origins*

The children will probably be interested in the fact that the word *dinosaur* is made from two words: *deinos* meaning *fearful* and *sauros* meaning *lizard*. They will probably have noticed that many dinosaur names end in '-saur' or '-saurus'. You could brainstorm a list or ask children to look in books to find them. Having drawn their attention to this some children will begin to notice compound words which are made from two others such as *outside* or *downstairs*. Which two words made *motorway*? If so you could begin a book of word sums: *out + side = outside*, etc.

## Word level work: Phonoogical awareness

### Silent letters

*Awareness of non-phonic spelling patterns*

Although these stories do not set out to introduce phonic patterns in a planned sequence it is worth making the most of opportunities as they arise. *A fright in the night* for instance introduces the letter sequence '-ight'. The children are probably becoming aware of silent letters and illogical spellings. After reading the story you could draw attention to this letter pattern and ask the child to spot each time it appears in the story: *night, fright* and *light*. If you have read the story to the class they might like to think of other words with this pattern.

In *The laughing princess* either *laugh, laughed* or *laughing* appears on nearly every page. Again draw the child's attention to this illogical pattern and ask him to spot as many examples as possible. Finally, you could ask the child if he can now spell *laugh*, having read it so often.