From Fell to Fever
Non-fiction

Content domain focus:

2b retrieve and record information/identify key details from fiction and non-fiction

2f identify/explain how information/narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole

Extract summary

This page is taken from *The Collins School Dictionary*. It is, like all dictionaries, organised alphabetically, and each headword is shown in bold. Pronunciation guidance to some of the headwords is given in brackets next to the headword. The word class that the headword belongs to is identified in brackets beneath it. Some entries have more than one definition, in which case they are numbered. The origin of the headword is given in square brackets at the end of the entry.

Unit summary

Looking for words and generally using a dictionary develops the children's scanning skills, as they have to use their alphabetical knowledge and visualise the word they are looking for. There is also an element of understanding how information is related and what information is being given if a dictionary is to be used to its full potential.

The questions in this unit not only involve the children in finding specific information, they also focus on the interrelationship between pieces of information.

⌐ Teaching prompts

• Activate the children's prior knowledge of dictionaries by asking them to work in groups and to list what they know about dictionaries: why they are used, how they are organised, etc. Share each group's lists and create a whole-class list.

• Check that the children are aware that, in a dictionary, the words are organised alphabetically by the second, third and even fourth letter.

Revisiting the text

Ask the children to:

• use the headwords and their definitions to create games, e.g. 'Call my Bluff', True/False, crosswords, word searches

• create their own personalised dictionaries, e.g. of technical words, nonsense words, local dialect words, subject-/topic-specific words, favourite words, hobby and pastime words

• develop a favourite words board and add their own favourites, along with definitions, examples of use and reasons why they like the words.

✓ Answers

Links to content domain requirements are in brackets after the answer.

1. To find out what words mean/how to spell words. [2f]

2. alphabetically [2f]

3. fell and fever [2b]

4. fertilizer; festive [2b]

5. a noun [2b]

6. fiesta, carnival, celebration [2b]

7. two [2b]

8. It tells you that it rhymes with date so you can pronounce it correctly. [2f]

9. It tells you that the word ferocious comes from the Latin word ferox, which means like a wild animal. [2f]

10. It gives an example of the word in a sentence so you can see how it can be used and what it means. [2f]

Assessment

The children are secure in their ability to retrieve information if they can use different strategies and techniques, including visualisation, to find words efficiently and effectively.

They understand how the text is organised and information is related if they have been able to work out the function of some of the elements of each entry that are addressed in the questions. Emphasise that, even with non-fiction texts, it is sometimes necessary to read between the lines to work out what information is being given and to make links between pieces of information to make sense of what is being read.

Next steps

Play games that involve children arranging words and objects in alphabetical order. Place a time limit on this type of activity in order to focus the children's attention on a speedy response.

Using dictionaries, challenge the children to find particular entries within a given time limit. If necessary, challenge them to open the dictionary within a few pages of the target entry. Remind them to think about where a letter is within the alphabet and therefore where it will be (approximately) in the dictionary.

Use other alphabetically ordered texts, such as encyclopedias and phone books, to explore their purpose and organisation.