

## Unit 1C The information around us

### ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children learn that information exists in a variety of forms, including text, still and moving pictures, charts and sounds and that different media are used for different purposes. They learn that ICT can be used to communicate and handle information in a variety of ways.

Children should be able to apply what they have learned in this unit when they are looking for and presenting information.

### WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This is an introductory unit about information and how it is communicated. It builds on experience of using software such as a painting program and a word processor. It provides a foundation for Units 1E 'Representing information graphically: pictograms', 2C 'Finding information', 2E 'Questions and answers', as well as Units 2A 'Writing stories: communicating information on using text', 3A 'Combining text and graphics' and 4A 'Writing for different audiences'.

### TECHNICAL VOCABULARY

- button/icon
- information
- text
- text/font styles
- graphics/pictures
- sound
- multimedia

### RESOURCES

- sound tapes
- assorted pictures
- multimedia program, *eg talking book, adventure game*
- samples of text from different sources and for different purposes
- pictures of signs and symbols in everyday life
- tape recorder

### EXPECTATIONS

#### at the end of this unit

*most children will:*

know that information exists in a variety of forms and be able to gather it from a variety of sources

*some children will not have made so much progress and will:*

have had opportunities to collect information in various forms and from various sources

*some children will have progressed further and will:*

recognise that computer programs use sounds, text and pictures to communicate information; begin to recognise some of the conventions used to communicate information

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

### SETTING THE SCENE

#### CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- **key idea:** that information can be presented in a variety of forms
  - ◆ Discuss with the children that materials 'tell' us things, *eg pictures show us what things look like, maps show where things are, labels describe what things are, sounds, such as bells and whistles, can tell us that something is about to happen.*
- **key idea:** that information comes from a variety of sources
  - ◆ Discuss with the children where we might find things out and introduce the idea of a variety of sources, *eg asking questions, books, television, people.*

### SHORT FOCUSED TASKS

- **key idea:** that sounds convey information
  - ◆ Prepare a tape recording of sounds that carry information, *eg a bell indicating the end of playtime, a television theme tune indicating that a programme is about to start, a baby crying indicating it is hungry, a police car or ambulance siren.* Ask the children to close their eyes, listen to the sounds and describe what the sounds are 'telling' them.
  - ◆ Children should tape record an interview with an adult, perhaps to collect information to support their topic work. Prior to the interviews they should decide on the questions that they want to ask. Topics will vary, *eg transport, houses, what it was like when they were children.* The recordings can then be played to the whole class. Children should then use the information gathered for other activities.
- **key idea:** that pictures provide information
  - ◆ Show the class a selection of poster-sized pictures, including photographs, representational drawings, abstract pictures, signs and maps. Ask the children to describe what each picture is 'telling' them, *eg it shows some of the types of animals that live in the sea, it shows how big a dinosaur is compared to a house.*
- **key idea:** that information is all around us in a variety of forms
  - ◆ Ask the children to look around the classroom and point out anything that provides them with information. Discuss how the information is communicated. Extend the search beyond the classroom walls but still within the school grounds. Ask the children to collect samples and sort them into text, pictures and sound. They may have samples that include pictures *and* text – this will provide the foundation for a multimedia group under the next activity.
  - ◆ Ask the children to consider how information is communicated in the wider world, *eg road signs, traffic lights, shop signs, road directions, instruction labels such as 'PUSH' and 'PULL'.* Record the findings, perhaps by drawing pictures. Sort these out into text, pictures, sound and multimedia.
  - ◆ On paper, children should record various objects that communicate information in different ways, *eg fold a sheet of paper into six sections and ask children to draw, or collect, pictures of things that communicate information using text, sound, still pictures, icons, text and pictures together, or symbols, which might include pictures of books, magazines or newspapers, alarm clocks, kitchen timers, microwave ovens, computer icons for printers, word processors, painting programs, comics, social signs, television cartoons or videos, warning signs.*
- **key idea:** that computers use icons to provide information and instructions
  - ◆ Introduce the children to a multimedia program such as a talking book or an adventure game. Ask them to look at the icons on the screen and to suggest what information or instruction they might provide. Encourage the children to check and see if they were right.
  - ◆ Children should explore the program and see how many different ways the computer can communicate information.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

## POINTS TO NOTE

## CHILDREN

- recognise that different materials can provide information

It might be possible to extend the discussion to include categories of information, *eg warnings (as in road signs and traffic lights), instructions or entertainment.*

- know that they can find information from various sources

Children should be encouraged to think about different types of books, *eg dictionaries, encyclopedias.*

- recognise that sounds convey information
- use a cassette recorder to collect and store information as sound

There are simple cassette recorders available that can record using a single key press. Most children would be able to record information using such a device. Children should be encouraged to record each question as well as the response. It might be appropriate to pair a less-confident child with one who has prior experience of using a microphone.

- explain what information a picture provides

Try to include pictures that include text and encourage children to distinguish between the information that the text and picture provides.

If a digital camera is available, children should be able to use it to record topic-related information, *eg different types of houses, transport, pets.*

- identify materials that provide information

More-able children could be encouraged to record the type of information that they provide.

- know what information is conveyed by some of the icons used in computer software

Discuss with the children what the electronic book provides when compared to the traditional paper-based version.  
(Children could create display cards for the computer area showing what the icons mean.)

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

### CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- **key idea:** that certain 'rules' (or conventions) are applied in communicating and presenting information

- ◆ Collect paper-based samples of text that are used for different purposes. Discuss why different styles and sizes of text or font are used, *eg a label in the classroom needs to be large so that everyone can see it – this might be the date on the board or the list of who is responsible for specific tasks*. Children might notice that a newspaper uses different sizes of writing on a page. They should be encouraged to express their ideas about why this might be. Some children may notice that colour is used to convey meaning, *eg red for stop or danger and green for go*. If drawers are labelled in the classroom and all of the labels are the same size, children might be asked why they have been prepared in such a way.
- ◆ Present a set of prepared text files to the children. Each should be set up for a specific purpose, *eg a suitable font size with a box or frame around it to produce labels for pictures for a display, a warning sign with large red text in a frame, a layout suitable for a poster with sufficiently large text to be read from a few feet away*. Children could suggest what they would use each one for. Some could demonstrate and others be given time to experiment later.

### INTEGRATED TASK

- to show that information can be presented in a variety of forms and collected from a variety of sources

- ◆ Ask the children to work in groups to collect information about an agreed topic. Encourage them to think about what they want to find out about the subject (but they should be prepared to find out other things).
- ◆ Ask the children to think about where and how they will find out the information and how they will collect and present it.
- ◆ Encourage the children to collect information in a variety of forms, *eg representational pictures, interviews, books, photographs*. Ask them to make a simple display of the materials they collect.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN

- know that large writing is needed if the information needs to be seen by everyone and that some colours are used for particular purposes, *eg red is used to warn us of danger*
- know that a computer can manipulate the appearance of text for a particular purpose

Children might look at a selection of books from the school library. These books should span as wide an age range as possible. They might notice that the books for younger children contain more pictures than text but that as the reader audience gets older there tend to be fewer and fewer pictures. Children should be encouraged to suggest that the pictures are there to provide additional information and that they can make a significant contribution to a story or to non-fiction material.

- select an appropriate style of presentation for a particular task

