



# TESSA

**Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa**

## Teaching Pack No. 7

### Middle Primary

<b>Section 1 Literacy:</b>	Understanding different kinds of information
<b>Section 2 Numeracy:</b>	Working with data sets
<b>Section 3 Science:</b>	Exploring solids
<b>Section 4 Social Studies:</b>	Using dance for learning
<b>Section 5 Life Skills:</b>	Investigating our place in the community

- Additional Resources:**
- Group work in your classroom
  - Working with large/multigrade classes

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## Literacy: Understanding different kinds of information

- 1 Understanding what you read
- 2 Developing visual literacy
- 3 Summarising what you read

**Key Question for the teacher:**

**How can you develop your questioning skills to help students use information texts effectively?**

**Keywords: information texts; comprehension; summary; questions; assessment**

**Learning Outcomes for Teachers:**

By the end of this section, you will have:

- **developed your ability to create questions and tasks that encourage close reading of texts and personal responses**
- **explored ways to teach students how to read and write about information presented in different forms**
- **helped your students develop the skills needed to summarise texts**
- **used these strategies to assess learning**

## Overview

In the 'information age' we all need to be able to read and respond to information presented in many different forms. Reading information from a chart or diagram requires different skills from reading a story.

As a teacher, your role is to help students understand what they read, summarise the main ideas in a text and respond with their own ideas. While it is important for students to be able to write answers to questions on what they have read, some will produce better work if they have opportunities to demonstrate what they understand through other activities, e.g. making posters or pie charts.

This section suggests ways to help students develop their comprehension and summarising skills.

# 1 Understanding what you read

Comprehension exercises are very common, but how well do they extend students' reading skills?

Teaching Example 1 demonstrates that you need to think very carefully about whether the 'reading comprehension' questions in textbooks really help you to know what students have understood from their reading. You need to create questions or activities that require students to read information texts carefully. Activity 1 gives you some examples to try out and use as models when designing your own questions and activities. The additional resource Using questioning to promote thinking gives further ideas.

## Teaching Example 1

At a workshop in Lusaka, Zambia, teachers of English as an additional language read a nonsense text and answered questions on it. The first sentence in this text was: 'Some glibbericks were ogging blops onto a mung' and the first 'comprehension' question was 'Who were ogging blops onto a mung?' Every teacher knew that the answer was 'some glibbericks'. In their discussion, they realised they could give the 'correct' answer because they knew that in English, 'some glibbericks' was the subject of this sentence. They didn't need to know who or what a glibberick was, in order to give the answer!

After the discussion, they worked in small groups to design questions and tasks that would show them whether or not students had understood the texts on which these questions and tasks were based. They learned that questions should not allow students to just copy information from one sentence in the text. They designed tasks in which students had to complete a table, design a poster or make notes to use in a debate as ways of showing what they had learned from reading a text.

They reflected that the questions they asked and the tasks they set meant they could better assess their students' understanding.

## Activity 1

Read '**Text on litter**'. Make copies of the article and tasks or write the paragraphs and tasks on your chalkboard.

- Cover them over.
- Before students read the article, ask some introductory questions. Your questions should help students to connect what they already know to the new information in the article. If your students are young or you need to read the text to them, you could write their answers on the board.
- Next, uncover the article and tasks, and ask students to read the article in silence and write answers to the tasks. When they have finished, collect their books and assess their answers.
- Return the books and/or give the whole class oral feedback on what they did well and discuss any difficulties they experienced.

**Text on litter****Litter**

Litter is any kind of 'left-over' or waste product that people do not put in its proper place, such as a rubbish bin. People who simply drop waste such as fruit peel or empty cans on the ground are guilty of littering. We sometimes call these people litter bugs.

**Litter does not just happen**

People are responsible for litter. An item of waste, such as the wrapping from a bar of chocolate, is not litter if it has been placed in a rubbish bin. It becomes litter when someone drops it on the ground, leaves it lying on the ground where he or she has been sitting or throws it out of a window.

**Litter can be dangerous to people**

Broken glass and sharp rusty cans that are left in places where people walk – and especially where young children play – can cut them. These cuts can lead to serious infections. Fruit and vegetable waste is sometimes slippery and if people step on it they may fall and break an arm or a leg. Litter can be a cause of road accidents when drivers try to move their cars or trucks out of the way of sharp objects that could cut their tyres. Plastic bags and pieces of cardboard sometimes blow onto the windscreens of vehicles and stop drivers from seeing clearly.

**Litter can be dangerous to animals and birds**

Glass and cans may also cut the feet or mouths of domestic or wild animals while they are grazing. Nylon fishing line that is thrown on the ground or into water can get wrapped around the beaks or legs of birds and cause them to die because they can no longer move or eat. Sea creatures, such as seals and sharks, may get caught up in old fishing nets. If they cannot free themselves they will also die.

**The dangers of plastic**

Plastic litter causes problems for fish, birds and people. In rivers and the sea it can be harmful to fish because they can get caught up in it and not break free. Plastic bags on beaches have led to the deaths of many seagulls. Even loosely woven bags, which vegetables and fruit are sometimes packaged in, can be harmful to birds. They get inside these and cannot find a way out, as the material is very tough. Pieces of plastic or plastic bags can get caught in the outboard motors of boats and can cause the motor to stop working.

If we want to keep our country clean and beautiful and to protect our people and our wildlife, we must not throw litter. It is not difficult to throw a can, bottle, plastic bag or piece of paper into a bin rather than on to the ground.

Notice that the answers to questions 1 to 5 require students to read the text carefully whereas questions 6 and 7 require them to use their own ideas.

Adapted from Taitz, L. et al, New Successful English, Learner's Book, Oxford University Press



**Writing tasks based on Litter**

**1. List seven kinds of litter that are mentioned in the article.** (To answer this question successfully students need to find information in several different paragraphs, so they have to read carefully.)

**Answer:** Fruit and vegetable peel, glass, cans, plastic, fishing line, paper, cardboard.

**2. Explain what the word litter means.** (Students could copy an answer from the first paragraph of the text without really understanding what the word means but the next question can help you to check their understanding because you are asking them to use a word or words from other languages that they know – for many students their home language.)

**Answer:** Litter is waste material that people do not put in its proper place (such as a rubbish bin.)

**3. What is the word (or words) for litter in any other languages that you know?**

**Answer:** Words from languages used in your class.

**4. List three kinds of litter that are harmful to birds.** (Birds are mentioned several times in the passage, not just in the paragraph with the heading that includes birds. Students need to find each reference to birds and then link this to different types of litter and the problems these cause.)

**Answer:** Nylon fishing line, plastic bags, woven fruit and vegetable bags.



**5. In your own words, describe three of the ways in which people can be harmed by litter.** (Students should use the sub-heading to guide them and then try to express the content of the paragraph in their own words rather than just copying from the paragraph. This will help you to see if they have understood what they have read.)

**Answer:** People can cut themselves on broken glass or sharp cans. People can slip on fruit or vegetable waste and break an arm or leg. People can be involved in road accidents when drivers try to avoid litter in the road or when they can't see because of litter blown onto the windscreen. People on water in motorboats may not be able to safely reach land if the motor of the boat is damaged by plastic. (Four ways are mentioned here.)

**6. Do you agree with the writer that it is not difficult to throw waste into a rubbish bin?** Give a reason for your answer. (This is a personal response question that encourages students to think critically and express their own ideas.)

**Answer:** This is a question to which students should be encouraged to give a variety of responses. For example, it is not possible to put waste in a rubbish bin if there are no bins in the school grounds or in the streets.

**7. Suggest what else can be done with waste products such as glass, paper, plastic, fruit and vegetable peels.** (This is also a personal response question and encourages class discussion about the environmental topic of recycling.)

**Answer:** This task gives you and the students an opportunity to discuss various forms of recycling. For example, vegetable and fruit peels can be put into a compost heap or dug straight into garden soil in order to enrich the soil. Plastic strips can be woven into useful mats for the floor. In some towns and cities, glass, cans and paper or cardboard can be taken to recycling facilities and people can even be paid for what they collect and bring to these places.



## 2 Developing visual literacy

Think about all the kinds of information texts that you read. Whether these are in the pages of textbooks, in advertising leaflets or on computer screens, they frequently include diagrams, charts, graphs, drawings, photographs or maps. To be successful as readers, you and your students need to understand how words, figures and visual images (such as photographs or drawings) work together to present information. Many writers on education now stress the importance of visual literacy. Learning how to read and respond to photographs and drawings is one part of becoming visually literate. Reading and responding to charts, graphs and diagrams is another. Bar and pie charts are some of the easier charts to understand and to make in order to summarise information.

### Teaching Example 2

Miss Maria Bako likes to make each student in her Primary 6 class of 60 students feel special. In her classroom she has a large sheet of paper with the month and day of each student's birthday. On each birthday, the students sing Happy Birthday to their classmate. One day, a student commented that in some months they sing the birthday song much more often than others. Maria decided to use this comment to do some numeracy and some visual literacy work on pie charts.

First, she wrote the names of the months on her chalkboard and then she asked students to tell her how many of them had birthdays in each month. She wrote the number next to the month (e.g. January 5; February 3, and so on).

Then she drew a large circle on the board and told students to imagine that this was a pie and that as there were 60 in the class there would be 60 sections in the pie, one for each student. The sections would join to make slices. There would be 12 slices, because there are 12 months in a year. Each slice would represent the number of students who had their birthday in a particular month, but each slice would be a different size. She began with the month with most birthdays – September. In September, 12 students had birthdays.

Students quickly got the idea of making 12 slices of different sizes within the circle to represent the number of birthdays in each month as a percentage of the class. They copied the birthday pie chart into their books and made each slice a different colour.

The class talked about other information they could put into a pie chart and decided to explore how many students played different sports, how many supported each team in the national soccer league and how many students spoke the different languages used in their area.

### Activity 2

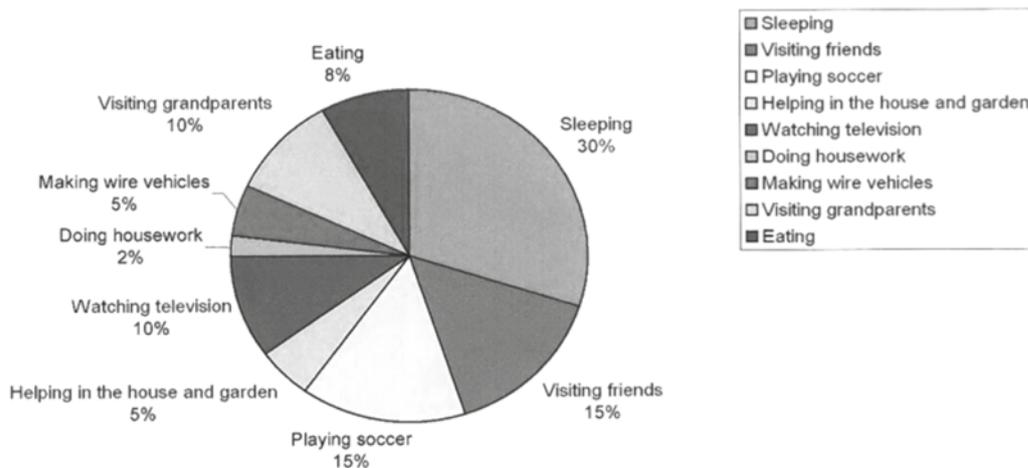
- Copy the pie chart onto your chalkboard.
- Ask students to suggest why this is called a pie chart.
- Write out the questions (part b) about the pie chart on your chalkboard and ask students to work in pairs to answer them.



- Discuss the answers with the class.
- Use your chalkboard to show students how to turn these answers into a paragraph about Iredia's weekend. Ask students to draw the pie chart.
- For homework, ask students to draw their own pie charts to show how they usually spend their time at weekends.
- After checking the homework, ask students to exchange their chart with a partner and to write a paragraph about their partner's weekend.
- What have you learned from these activities?
- What relevant activity could you do next?

## A pie chart

### a) A pie chart: How Iredia spends his time at weekends



### Basic information

30% sleeping;  
 15% visiting friends;  
 15% playing soccer;  
 5% helping in the house and garden;  
 10% watching television;  
 2% doing homework;  
 5% making wire vehicles;  
 10% visiting grandparents;  
 8% eating.

### b) Questions on the pie chart

1. What does the pie chart tell us? (How Iredia spends his time at weekends.)
2. What does Iredia spend the most time doing? (Sleeping.)
3. What does he spend the least time doing? (Homework.)
4. What does he do for the same amount of time as he watches television?  
(Visits grandparents.)
5. What does he do for the same amount of time as helping in the house and garden?  
(Making wire vehicles.)

6. When he is awake, what two things does Iredia spend the most time doing? (Visiting friends and playing soccer.)
7. If you made a pie chart to show how you spend your weekend, would it be similar to Iredia's or different? (Many possible answers.)

You could help students write about their partner's weekend by designing a writing frame with them, or by agreeing an example paragraph together. Here are examples for use to use or adapt.

#### Writing frame for describing a partner's weekend

X's weekends  
 X likes/doesn't like weekends...  
 He/she spends the greatest part of the weekend...  
 He/she usually... and sometimes...  
 On Saturday mornings...  
 On Saturday afternoons...  
 On Saturday evenings...  
 On Sunday mornings...  
 On Sunday afternoons...  
 On Sunday evenings...

#### c) Paragraph about Iredia's weekends

Iredia loves weekends. He enjoys staying in his warm bed much later than on school mornings and taking his time over meals with the family. He spends the biggest part of his weekend visiting friends and playing soccer. He usually watches television with his family in the evenings and sometimes stays up very late to do this. On Saturday mornings he and his sisters help their parents with cleaning the house or working in the garden. After they have finished, his sisters like to go to the shops but Iredia either goes to his friends or spends some time making wire cars and trucks that he and his friends can race. Sometimes he takes his cars and trucks to show his grandparents when he visits them on Sundays. Usually he needs to find some time on Sunday evening to do his homework for Monday.

*Some of the information in this paragraph cannot be gleaned from the chart. The author has made up bits based on their experience and the data given. You may wish to explore this with your students. Ask them what they can say from the chart and which parts are made up.*

#### d) What you and your students can learn from these activities

- To read information on a pie chart.
- To compare one item of information on the chart with another.
- To make a pie chart in order to summarise information.
- To understand that the same information can be presented in different ways.
- To use information from a pie chart to write a paragraph.
- To learn 'time expressions' (e.g. 'usually', 'sometimes').

### e) Ideas for further activities

To consolidate students' learning about pie charts, they could make another one – perhaps about class birthdays or about sports teams they support or languages they speak. You could also decide to show them other ways of representing information such as a bar graph or a table if you have information about these. Your colleagues may be able to assist you here.

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## 3 Summarising what you read

Learning to find and summarise the main ideas in the chapters of textbooks and other study materials becomes increasingly important as students move up through the school. These skills take practice to acquire.

The **Activity 3** and '**Text on the baobab**' give examples of ways to help students learn how to summarise information texts. You will need to do such activities many times. For older students, you could ask colleagues to show you what the students you teach are required to read in other subjects such as social studies or science. You could then use passages from social studies or science textbooks for summary work in the language classroom by following the steps in the **Activity 3**.

### Teaching Example 3

The students in Mal Adamu Jibo's Primary 6 class were anxious about the forthcoming examinations. They told him they didn't really understand what their teachers meant when they told the students to 'revise' the chapters in their textbooks. Adamu decided to use an information text from their English textbook to give his class some ideas about how to find and write down the main points in a text.

He asked his students to tell him the purpose of the table of contents, chapter headings and sub-headings in their textbooks. It was clear from their silence that many students had not thought about this. A few were able to say that these give readers clues about the main topics in the book. Adamu told the students that in order to revise a chapter; they should write the sub-headings on paper, leaving several lines between each one. Then they should read what was written in the textbook under one sub-heading, close their books and try to write down the key points of what they had just read.

Next, they should check their written notes against the book and make changes to their notes by adding anything important they had left out or crossing out anything they had written incorrectly. Adamu said that some students prefer to make notes in the form of a mind map in which there are connections between important points. He showed them how to do this.

Finally, he reminded them to ask their teachers to explain anything they had not understood. Adamu also told them how he made notes of what he found out about his students and their learning to help him plan more lessons.

### Activity 3

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Before the lesson, copy the text on the baobab tree or write it on your chalkboard. Try out the activities yourself first.

- Showing students some newspaper and magazine pages, ask why the articles have headlines and what they tell the reader. Ask them to suggest why their textbooks have headings and sub-headings.
- Ask students to read the information text about the baobab tree and to work in pairs to decide which paragraphs are on the same topic.
- Ask them to write a heading that summarises the paragraph(s) on each topic.
- Ask some students to read out their headings and write these on the chalkboard.
- Agree which are the best headings for each set of paragraphs on the same topic.
- Leave the 'best' headings on the board with some space under each one. Ask students to suggest key points from the paragraphs and record these.
- Show students how to link headings and key points in a mind map to help them remember about baobab trees.

#### Text on the baobab

The baobab is a very unusual tree. Some people think it is ugly because it is fat and for much of the year it has no leaves. It does not even seem to grow the right way up. In fact, some people who live in the land of the baobab say that it grows upside down with its branches in the earth and its roots in the air.

The baobab does things differently from other trees. Most trees use bees and birds to carry pollen grains from one tree to another so that the trees can be fertilised and make new flowers, fruit or nuts. The baobab uses bats. In early summer this tree produces big flowers with white petals. The flowers only open at night when the bats appear. The bats suck the nectar and transport the pollen from one tree to another on their wings and bodies.

Baobabs live for a very long time. Some of the largest baobabs may be over 3,000 years old.

The tree has many uses. In the past, some of the Khoi and San people of southern Africa used baobabs for their homes. They set fire to the soft insides of the trunk, making a hole big enough to live in. Even with this big hole in the trunk, the tree continued to live.

The bark of the tree has a number of uses. It can be used for making soft floor mats, paper and thread. The fibres of the bark make very strong rope.

Other parts of the tree also have their uses. If the roots are mashed, they make a soft porridge. The soft insides of the tree provide moisture for thirsty animals during the dry season. If the seeds are soaked in water for a few days, they produce a medicine that is very good for fevers. If the seeds are dried and ground up, they make a good but rather bitter coffee. If the leaves are boiled they become like cabbage and can be eaten.

There are many stories about the baobab. The people in Venda in southern Africa say that the trees were once the hiding place for evil spirits. Then a kind god came and tore the trees out of the ground and replanted them upside down. As a result, the evil spirits could no longer hide in the trees.

Other people believe that if you suck the seeds you will be safe from crocodiles, and if you drink a drink made from the bark you will grow to be big and powerful.

The baobab is a truly amazing tree. It is one of the marvels of Africa.

### Suggested sub-headings for *The Baobab* text

Paragraph 1: What a baobab looks like

Paragraph 2: How pollen is transported between baobab trees

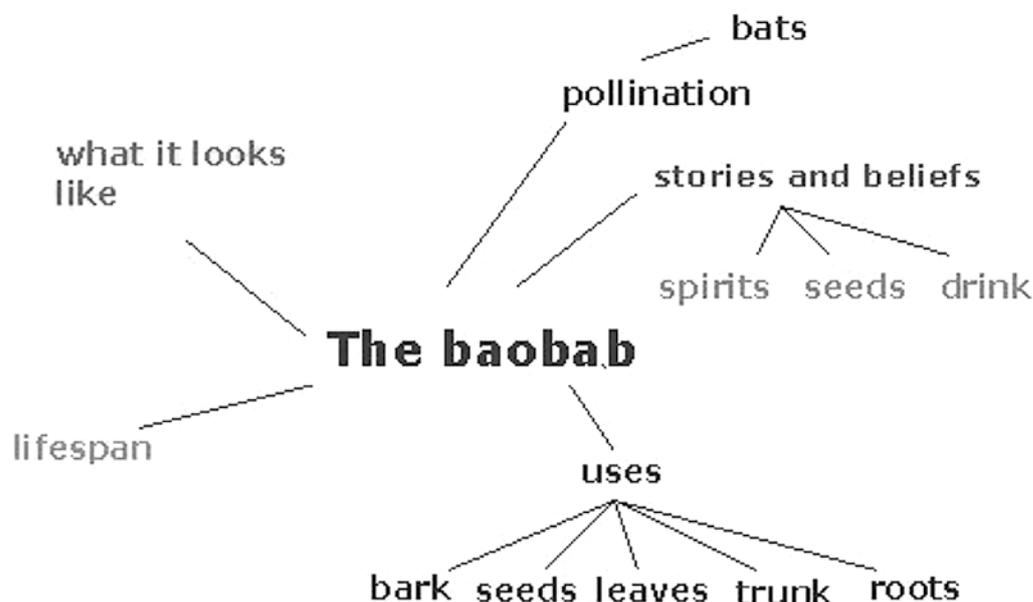
Paragraph 3: Lifespan

Paragraphs 4, 5, 6: Uses of the baobab

Paragraphs 7, 8: Stories and beliefs about baobabs

Note: There is no new information in the final paragraph. It provides a comment from the author, giving his or her opinion of this tree.

### A mind map summary of *The Baobab*



Adapted from: Ellis, R. & Murray, S. Let's Use English, Learners' Book 5

# Numeracy: Working with data sets

- 1 Collecting data
- 2 Interpreting and creating charts
- 3 Understanding data

**Key Question for the teacher:**

**How can students collect, collate and understand data?**

**Keywords:** survey; data collection; data analysis; interpretation; pie chart; bar chart; pictogram; histogram; line graph; scatter graph

**Learning Outcomes for Teachers:**

By the end of this section, you will have:

- be familiar with a range of different data sets that students can usefully collect for analysis
- have developed your knowledge of graphically representing data
- have developed and used a structured question approach to assess your students' understanding

## Overview

There are three core aspects of working with data: collecting data (using what students can do already and new methods to count things); recording data; analysing and presenting data. In all these activities, students themselves must play the major role.

The focus in this section is practical: students will collect data themselves, decide how best to represent it and analyse it. Through whole-class discussion, decisions are made by the students themselves, with guidance from you.

This section will help you plan and carry out these activities with your students, working with real 'first hand' data gathered in the classroom.

# 1 Collecting data

Students are often more interested in working with data that they have collected themselves – they know what the numbers are describing, and where the numbers came from. Surveys help students to understand the concept of data collection and students are encouraged to continue collecting interesting data outside school. Organising your class into groups so that everyone is able to contribute is important. Whole-class discussion can be used to share the data the different groups have collected.

## Teaching Example 1

Mrs Kazulu in Uganda decided to have a completely practical lesson and divided her class into three groups (if you have a big class you may need more groups) – Her students were going to undertake small classroom surveys to collect data. She chose surveys that were relevant to the students themselves, asking one group to find out the number of siblings in their families, another to find out the number of letters in their names and the third to find the number of students from different districts in their class.

Mrs Kazulu drew a template like the one shown below on the board. She gave her students time to copy her chart into their exercise books. She then asked them to work, one group at a time, going round the class and asking their survey questions in pairs.

Later, all groups shared their data and were asked to display it in some way in the classroom. Mrs Kazulu would use the data collected in future lessons.

## Activity 1

Before you begin, show your class how to do a tally. Ask them why they think this might be a useful technique.

Explain to your class that they are going to do a survey about birthdays. Ask them to suggest the best way to organise the list of the different months of the year. Then go round the class, asking each student to call out the month of their birth and let each student record the information as it is being called out.

Next, ask one student for each month to count up the birthdays and put in the total.

You could extend this work by setting an individual homework task, such as to survey the favourite sport or drink of family or friends. In the next lesson, discuss what the data tells you. Ask your class to think of other data they could collect like this and let them have another go at practising these skills.

What other ways could you organise your students to collect such data?

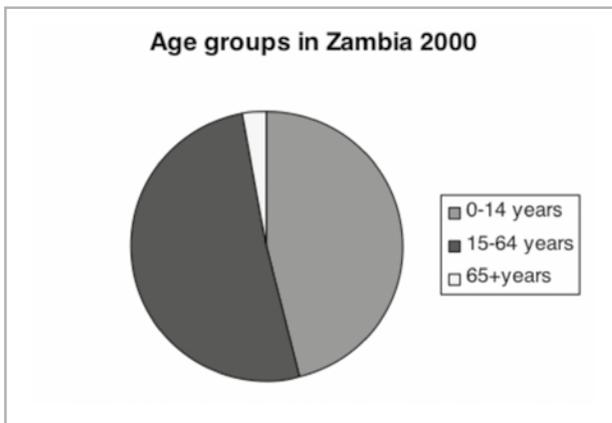


**Tally chart**

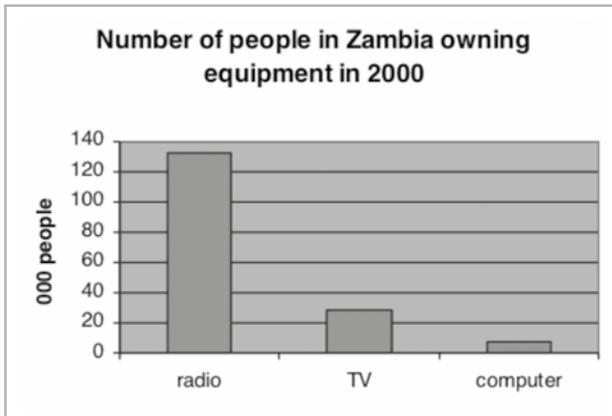
Making tally marks is a useful way to quickly count things in different categories. It involves making a mark or placing a store for each item counted in the particular group. The chart below shows a chart started for siblings in a class of 56 Primary 4 students. Each bundle of marks IIII represents five children.

Name	Brothers	Sisters
Mukasa	II	III
Dembe	IIII	I

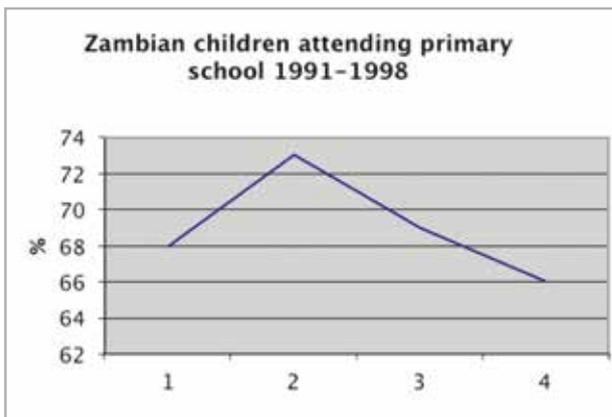
**Pie Chart**



**Bar Chart**



**Line Graph**



## 2 Interpreting and creating charts

Collecting data is only part of some investigations, as it may need to be analysed and displayed to understand it better or to share the information with others. Students can show their data by using pictographs, pie charts, bar graphs, histograms or line graphs. It is important that students know which chart or graph is appropriate for which set of data, and so your examples should be clear.

Again, you will use data from the students' own experiences but it is also a good idea to bring examples to class from newspapers, magazines and government publications.

Helping students understand the different kinds of chart takes time and you will need to plan several activities on each method to develop their understanding.

### Teaching Example 2

Mrs Kunda teaches at a school in Mbale. She wanted to make sure her students could interpret simple charts before going on to produce charts of their own. She brought to schools some examples of pie charts, bar charts and line graphs.

First, she showed the class one of each type and, using some questions she had prepared beforehand, she checked that the students were able to understand the information that each one presented.

She then put the class into groups and gave out other charts. She wrote a few simple statements on the board, and told the groups to decide whether each one was true or false, according to the information in the charts. As the groups did the activity, Mrs Kunda walked around and listened.

When they had finished, Mrs Kunda checked the answers with the whole class, and explained one or two things that they had found difficult. In doing this, she introduced the idea that different types of chart are suitable for different types of information. Then she praised the class for their good work.

### Activity 2

- Write the words 'pie chart', 'bar chart' and 'line graph' on the chalkboard and remind students what each type looks like.
- Copy the data found below on the board, and get students to suggest which type of chart (pie chart, bar chart or line graph) would be most suitable in each case for presenting it. Use questioning to indicate the main features and uses of each type of chart.
- For each set of data, construct a chart on the board with the help of the students. (Draw the main outline and ask students to come out in turn and add to the chart. Ask the class for feedback each time.)

In the next lesson, give out similar data and ask students to make charts individually.

**Data sets****Set 1**

Proportion of Zambian men employed in 2005: 86%

Proportion of Zambian women employed in 2005: 74%

People in rural areas of Zambia who can get safe water: 28%

**Set 2**

Main language groups in Zambia, 2000

Bemba 30.1%

Nyanja 10.7%

Tonga 10.6%

Lozi 5.7%

Chewa 4.9%

Nsenga 3.4%

Tumbuka 2.5%

Numbers of people in main towns 2000

Lusaka 1,085,000

Ndola 374,000

Kiywe 364,000

Chingola 147,000

Mufulira 122,000

**Set 3**

Students attending secondary school 1991–1998

1991: 20%; 1993: 23%; 1996: 20%; 1998: 23%.

Visitors to Zambia 1990–2001

1990: 141,000; 1995: 235,000; 2001: 492,000



### 3 Understanding Data

This final part is on analysis and interpretation of data once it has been displayed. It will enable you to assess the success of your teaching (for more information, see the additional resource **Assessing learning**).

Using information from the science teacher or another subject teacher shows that data collection and analysis is important across the curriculum; it also allows you to work with other teachers and gain support. **Teaching Example 3** and **Activity 3** show how your students can use new data and how you can use this to assess their understanding.

You may decide to use a structured question approach for your assessment, so that you can find out exactly how much each of your students has learned.

#### Teaching Example 3

Mr Kaluba wanted to make sure his students were confident at handling and interpreting data. He also wanted to show them what information they could get from their charts.

He asked the head teacher to provide numbers of students in each class in the school and asked his students to use this to draw a chart that showed the data well. He asked students to work in pairs to help each other with this task. Each pair had to agree on the best kind of chart to use.

Mr Kaluba asked them to note the title, the units used, the scales, what the axes represent, the highest and lowest points and any patterns in the chart, and to write a few sentences to explain what the chart showed them.

Mr Kaluba was pleased with their response and felt that his lesson had been successful. He displayed the students' charts on the classroom wall.

#### Activity 3

To assess how well your students analyse and interpret data, you can use a structured question approach with questions that gradually get harder. This means starting with easy ones that all students can answer, moving on to less easy ones that can be answered by the majority of the students and including a last one which can be answered only by the more able students.

- Write the data on the board or on a piece of manilla paper.
- Write the questions on a separate sheet of paper.
- Show the chart and questions to the class. Explain they are to work on their own, drawing a chart using the data and then answering as many questions as they can.
- Give the class one lesson to do the activity.
- Collect in and mark their work.

Next lesson, give feedback to the class about what they did well and where they need support and say how you will do this.



**Structured questions**

A structured question is one that has three parts.

- Part 1 is easy and can be answered by all students.
- Part 2 is a bit more difficult but can be answered by the majority of students.
- Part 3 is more difficult and tests the more able students.

Here is an example.

Alice and Mary are having an argument. Alice says that it is hotter this week than it was last week. Mary thinks it was hotter last week. Here are the temperatures for the two weeks.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week 1	22 °C	21 °C	19.5 °C	23 °C	23 °C	23.5 °C	22 °C
Week 2	18 °C	19 °C	23.5 °C	25 °C	26 °C	24 °C	22 °C

- Draw the temperature for both weeks on the same line graph, using different colours for each week. (Part 1)
- Which week showed the highest temperature? (Part 2)
- Which week showed the lowest temperature? (Part 2)
- Find the mean temperature for each week. (Part 2)
- Find the range of temperatures for each week. (Part 2)
- In some ways Alice is right and in some ways Mary is right. Explain. (Part 3)

*Original source: The New Uganda Primary Mathematics Student's Book 7*

## Science: Exploring solids

1 Solids - Where do they come from?

2 What do metals do?

3 Making irreversible changes

Key Question for the teacher:

How can you encourage student inquiry to explore properties and changes in solids?

Keywords: solids; inquiry; properties; investigation; rust; discussion

Learning Outcomes for Teachers:

By the end of this section, you will have:

- supported students as they carry out their own science investigations (inquiry-based learning)
- explored different ways to present the results of their investigations
- used informal discussion with your students to share ideas and develop interesting areas of inquiry

## Overview

The emphasis in this section is on one state of matter – solids. We consider how to encourage students to inquire into the origin of the solids they encounter daily. You will help them learn about these solids and communicate what they learn to each other.

To do this we use an approach sometimes known as inquiry-based learning – learning by finding something out for yourself. This is very different from being told something, because the students have to wrestle with their own ideas and explain their thinking.

For solids we can ask: 'Where does this come from?' Or: 'What are its properties?' And: 'Can it be changed?' (This often involves much more active learning than simply listening and hoping to remember. And if we don't know – or can't find out yet – there is always the possibility that one day, we will be thrilled to come across the missing information.)

Some solid substances are found naturally; others are manufactured. For example sand is a natural material and glass is a manufactured material. In fact, glass is manufactured from sand. Do you know what the actual process involves? Try to find out, and you are doing inquiry-based science.

Similarly, wood is a natural material obtained from trees, and paper is made from wood. Certain wasps chew wood into pulp to process it into 'paper' that they

use to build the cells of their nest. People have discovered how to do the same thing. You could extend your inquiry and experiment with making your own paper from pulped wood.

Good starting points for this approach are informal discussions where students share ideas, raise questions and develop threads of inquiry that interest them. **Teaching Example 1** shows how one teacher encouraged inquiry in her students. In **Activity 1**, you take this further with a class display and accompanying books made by your students.

## 1 Solids - Where do they come from?

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### Teaching Example 1

Whenever Jessica in Kampala, Uganda, had a little spare time in the school day, she played 'the wondering game' with her class (or the children left behind while others went to choir practice). One student would have a turn to pick up something – anything – and ask, 'I wonder where this came from?' Then everyone would put their heads together and share what they knew and thought, agreeing and disagreeing and building ideas as they talked. It was very informal. But it always amazed Jessica that students would come back some days later with more information from home or having noticed something in a book or magazine.

The wondering game seemed to act like a key, opening the door to students' curiosity. She wondered if there was a way to make this part of formal science lessons.

## Activity 1

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Interesting materials gathered by students can be displayed in a classroom 'science museum'. Agreed facts for each material are written on cards to support the display, just like in a real museum. The display grows throughout the term.

When you have enough different materials, ask pairs of students to make little information books to add to the display.

Make sure that you give your students time and help to write drafts and plan the layout of the books they make, so that they can be really proud of their work. This also gives you a chance to ensure that the scientific information is accurate. Try to encourage titles like: The story of glass; How cement is made; From trees to books; Where does salt come from? How to make your own glue.

Older students could make the books for younger students to read.

What differences did you notice between the first drafts and the finished books? Did you ask students to comment on each other's books?

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## 2 What do metals do?

Why is it that some solid objects feel cold to the touch and others don't? Think of a wooden spoon and a metal spoon. When we first pick them up off the table, they must be at the same room temperature – yet the metal spoon feels colder.

Some materials carry, or conduct, heat better than others. Metals have the property of being good thermal conductors. The metal spoon conducts heat away from our hand and hence feels colder. The wooden spoon is a poor thermal conductor – it is a good thermal insulator.

### Teaching Example 2

On a Monday, Mrs Kapere brings from home a range of different metal items and displays them on her table at the front of the class. They include a gold ring, old silver and copper coins, iron, steel and brass nails and screws, and wires of different sorts.

While the rest of the class is busy with other work, she gathers the group that will inquire into and investigate the properties of metals around her. They handle and discuss what is displayed. They argue about whether metals bounce. They start to raise questions: Are all metals shiny? Which is the hardest/strongest metal? Is tarnishing and rusting a property?

Mrs Kapere also suggests some questions: Do all metals conduct electricity? What about magnetism? What are alloys? They realise that there are many properties to be investigated, but some at a later stage.

She supports them for the week as they prepare to present the results of their inquiry. Next week, another group will be supported when they do their work on a different set of substances such as plastics or wood.



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Object	Label
Piece of copper wire	Pick up the wire. Can you bend it? Where have you seen it being used? What is able to pass through it?
Woven basket	How does the basket feel? Can you easily pull it apart?
Metal spoon	Pick up the spoon and think of three words to describe how it feels. What happens to the spoon if you put one end in a cup of very hot water?
Pottery cup	Can you change the shape of the pottery? Would it break if you dropped it? (DO NOT TRY THIS.)
Piece of glass	Can you see through the glass? What would happen if you dropped it? (DO NOT TRY THIS.)
Plastic bag	What happens if you drop water onto the plastic bag? Does it go through into the bag? Can you easily fold up the bag?
Wooden spoon	Can you bend the spoon? What happens to the spoon if you put one end in a cup of very hot water?
Piece of cotton fabric	Hold the material up to your face. Can you see through it? What does it feel like?
Small magnet and pins	Move the magnet over the pins. What happens? Where have you seen a magnet being used?



## Activity 2

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- Start by discussing what happens when you add something soluble like sugar to your tea. How can you tell something has dissolved? Perhaps with older students you will use this as a chance to introduce terms like solvent (the hot liquid tea), solute (the sugar) and solution (the resulting sweet liquid).
  - Give groups five different named substances and containers of water. Which of these substances are soluble in water? Ask them to make predictions and to record the results of their investigation in the form of a table using words like 'slightly soluble' and 'readily soluble'
  - Finally, ask each group to plan their own investigation of a different variable (something that can change) that might affect solubility of sugar in water. Think of things like temperature of liquid (solvent); granular size of sugar (solute), stirring or shaking the container. You might want to suggest students think how to present their results as a graph.
- 

## 3 Making irreversible changes

Here, we build on the first two activities by now considering ways in which matter can be changed. In science there are two types of changes students should consider:

- reversible changes – called physical changes;
- irreversible changes (changes that cannot easily be reversed) – called chemical changes.

Wax melting with heat and then solidifying again is a physical change. Dissolved sugar can be regained if the liquid is evaporated, so this is also a physical change. But glass cannot be easily turned back into sand – so this is a chemical change.

Teaching Example 3 shows one way that students can be challenged to think about chemical changes through a series of guided demonstrations.

When iron and steel rust (a chemical change) the metal loses its shape and strength. In Teaching Example 3 you use a competition to get your students thinking about how they could slow down this chemical change.

### Teaching Example 3

Sam is an unqualified teacher volunteering in his rural village school. He believes that learning should be a combination of fun and seriousness. When the time comes to look at irreversible changes he sets up a series of activities.

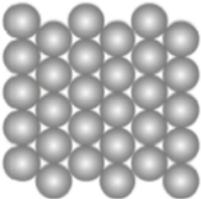
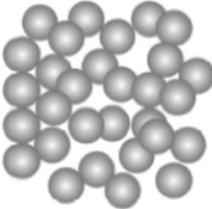
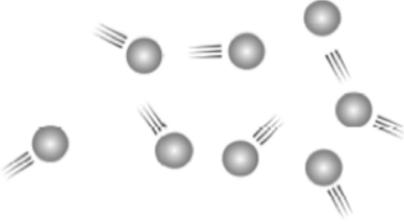
First, he demonstrates what happens when a small cube of bread on the end of a wire pushed into a cork handle is toasted to a cinder over a flame. He asks his students to observe carefully. Eventually the bread gets dry enough to catch light and burn with a flame. He then asks: 'When did it stop being bread?' 'What do you think has happened?' 'What solid substance are we left with if we grind the remains to a powder?'



Some of the students have heard of carbon and Sam explains this is what is left. He burns a small piece of wood and shows this, too, leaves carbon. He listens carefully to their answers and encourages questions based on their observations. In this way, he is able to assess their learning and thinking.

Next, he shows them a more obviously chemical change. He mixes tartaric acid powder and baking powder (sodium bicarbonate) and shows that no change happens. But then he adds water and asks them to observe. This gave rise to lots of questions. Why all the fizzing and bubbling? What is in the bubbles? What gas is given off? Have the substances changed? If we evaporated the water what would we get? He talks about how new substances have been made.

Sam finishes the lesson by asking his students to each find three examples of chemical changes for tomorrow's lesson. He is very pleased with the examples they give – some of the students even bring in materials to show how they have changed.

Molecules and Atoms Teacher Information	A Particle Model for Solids, Liquids and Gases
<p><b>SOLID</b></p> <p><b>Particles</b> Closely packed Arranged in a regular pattern Vibrate about a fixed point, no other movement Strongly bonded to neighbouring particles.</p> <p><b>Properties of Solids</b> Not easily compressed Fixed shape Fixed volume Can be heavy or light</p>	 <p><b>SOLID (EXAMPLE: ICE)</b></p>
<p><b>LIQUID</b></p> <p><b>Particles</b> Fairly closely packed Not arranged in a regular pattern Free to slide over one another Weakly bonded to neighbouring particles</p> <p><b>Properties of Liquids</b> Not easily compressed No fixed shape Fixed volume Can be heavy or light.</p>	 <p><b>LIQUID (EXAMPLE: WATER)</b></p>
<p><b>GAS</b></p> <p><b>Particles</b> Widely spread out Not arranged in a regular pattern Free to move in all directions Not bonded to neighbouring particles</p> <p><b>Properties of Gases</b> Can be compressed No fixed shape Variable volume Very light</p>	 <p><b>GAS (EXAMPLE: WATER VAPOUR)</b></p>

### Activity 3

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Show your class some metal articles that have rusted. Ask them: Where have they seen rust? What makes the iron or steel rust? What sort of change is this? Then tell them their challenge is to find out how to stop iron rusting.

Divide your class into groups. Give each group two iron nails (or other small pieces of iron) and tell them to clean the nails with sandpaper.

Then ask them to think how they will protect the iron from rusting. They should plan their investigation; what they will do, the equipment they will need and make predictions. Why do they think they have been given two nails?

The next day, ask the groups to set up their experiments. You will need to plan time for them to make observations over the next few weeks. After a few weeks, ask each group to report back on their investigation. Was their method successful? Where might it be used?

*Original source: Stories into Books – D Dyer and A & V Kenyon (UCT 1990)*

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# Social Studies:

## Using dance for learning

- 1 Dance tells a story
- 2 Making our own dances
- 3 Getting ready for a performance

**Key question for the teacher: How can you use dance to enhance learning and physical well-being?**

**Keywords: dance; choreography; culture; domba; tradition; change**

**Learning Outcomes for Teachers:**

**By the end of this section, you will have:**

- explored ways to show how African dance traditions can express society's needs and values
- helped your students understand the changing nature of tradition through practical dance
- drawn on dance traditions to improve learning and assessment, and develop students' physical well-being

## Overview

The arts in general are an integral part of the culture of a people and dance is a very strong and vibrant dimension of many cultures. Dance is part of every aspect of African life. Many forms of dance originating in Africa, although rooted in the past, have changed or have been lost, so encouraging an interest in dance will protect those still in use.

### 1 Dance tells a story

This section will help you develop ways of using dance in the classroom. It explores the cultural traditions of dance in Africa, as well as new ways you can use dance across the curriculum

Helping your students appreciate the value of studying traditional African dance is an important part of teaching the arts. Learning about the arts is often rooted in stories from the past.

Also, the arts enable people to express meaning in their everyday lives and help them to develop their sense of identity and self-worth.

Teaching Example 1 and Activity 1 will help you consider with your students how traditions change and disappear, and debate whether this is a good or bad thing.



### Teaching Example 1

Ms Sylvia Msane teaches at a primary school in Sebokeng, a township south of the Johannesburg city centre in South Africa.

Sylvia is married to a man of Zulu origins and they speak English and Isizulu at home. However, her mother's ancestors are from Venda. Sylvia is concerned that her students, like many other young people in South Africa, know very little about their cultural origins. Sylvia thinks of a saying that has been passed down to her: 'Umntu ngu muntu nga bantu' – 'A person is a person because of other people'.

She decides to tell her students a story that her grandmother told her when she was a child about the Venda people. After telling them how the Venda people came to live in the northern parts of South Africa, she shows them some traditional Venda clothes and pictures of young women dancing the domba. One student asks what the women are doing. Sylvia explains that these women have almost completed their initiation and are dancing in the form of a python. She tells them another story to explain the significance of this snake and they discover how the domba dance celebrates the fertility of young women. Another student asks her if she was initiated in this way and she explains that she wasn't. People's lives and priorities have changed and many traditions from the past have died out. They debate whether it is a good or bad thing that this has happened.

#### Stories of the Venda drum

Long, long ago, the ancestor god called Mwari gave the Venda people a sacred drum called the Ngoma Lungundu. In these ancient days, the ancestors of the Venda lived in Zimbabwe. One day, they received a divine message that they should pick up their sacred drum, the Ngoma Lungundu, and move south.

This magic drum was large and heavy and had to be carried by many men. In order to preserve the power of the drum, it could never touch the ground. When struck by the chief it could cause fog, hail, rain, thunder or lightning. At times, the great god Mwari would play the drum himself. At these times the drum would appear to be playing itself. Enemies fled in terror, fainted or died when they heard its powerful rhythms.

These powers helped to protect the ancestors of the Venda people during this journey and eventually they arrived where they live today in the northern parts of South Africa. Here, there is a lake called Fundudzi that is sacred to the Venda people. Many years ago, a great hero of the Venda people, called Thoyo ya Ndou, disappeared into this lake, taking with him the magical drum. Most people think that it has never been seen since, but some believe it lies guarded and hidden in a cave. Thoyo ya Ndou, or Head of the Elephant, was greatly admired because he united the Venda people and there was peace and prosperity. Ever since he disappeared, many say there has been disagreement and strife between the royal Venda families.





*Original source: Catalogue: Ten Years of Collecting (1979–89), Standard Bank Foundation Collection of African Art, Editors: Hammond-Tooke & Nettleton, 1989*

### Activity 1

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Find out from your class, colleagues or members of the community if there are any traditional dancers in the area.

Ask the head teacher if you can invite the person in.

Contact the person and ask them to come and talk to your class about local dances and to demonstrate one or two dances. Ask them to bring the clothes they wear.

Prepare your class for the visit. Think about questions the students may want to ask.

On the day, prepare the classroom so there is a space for the visitor to sit and dance and so all the students can see.

Welcome and introduce the visitor. The visitor talks and dances for perhaps half an hour.

Encourage your students to ask the visitor questions.

After the visit, discuss with your students what they have learned about dance. Who liked it? Who would like to do more? Think what you can do next. Maybe the visitor could return to teach them some dances?

## 2 Making our own dances

Dance in the classroom lends itself to cross-curricular work, as you explore the ideas behind dances, the significance of the costumes and learn how to do the dances.

Dance is a physical activity and can be done as part of the physical education curriculum or it could be used to explore ideas in other subject areas such as literature and science, for example.

In Teaching Example 2 and Activity 2 dance is used to help students show what they know about a topic or tell a story.

### Teaching Example 2

Mrs Agholor has been working with her class on how the brain sends messages around the body. She decides to use this topic in her PE lessons where she is doing a series of lessons on dance.

Mrs Agholor tells her students that she is going to divide them into groups of between six and ten. Each group has to think of ways to show how a message goes from the brain to a part of the body to tell it to move and other messages come back to the brain to develop or stop the move. She gives them some time to think about this and goes around supporting them as they talk.

After 15 minutes, she suggests they think about how to do the dance and start practising. She reminds them that they have to convey their ideas through movement with no words.

When they have had time to practise, each group shows what they have done. After each performance, the rest of the class has to guess what is happening and can ask questions.

She decides to give them time to develop their ideas and show them to the class the following week, one group at the end of each day.

Mrs Agholor notes that everyone has had fun and thinks her students now also appreciate the importance of dance as a means of expression and as a way to communicate.

### Activity 2

Ask each student to research a dance that a parent or older relative used to perform or still does. It does not have to be a 'traditional' dance. They should find out:

- Where the dance comes from
- Why the dance was performed and what purpose it served
- Where it was performed
- How it was performed

Give them time to do this and write out how to do the dance.

Next, using one of your local traditional dances as a base, ask your students to list what it is meant to show.



Now ask your students to make up their own dance using any techniques they like, to show similar ideas. These could be about:

- reaching adulthood
- the birth of a baby
- a good harvest

Give them time to practise and then share their dances.

Remind your students that they should show their emotions – such as happiness, anxiety, horror, sadness – with their bodies and faces as they dance.

Discuss these emotions and give them time to practise again. Share their performances again and discuss how they improved.

Encourage your students to ask the visitor questions.

After the visit, discuss with your students what they have learned about dance. Who liked it? Who would like to do more? Think what you can do next. Maybe the visitor could return to teach them some dances?

### 3 Getting ready for a performance

Dance can be very personal but it also lends itself to group performance and allows your students to grow in confidence and self-esteem. This is very important as it can enhance their attitude to learning and their achievements.

As a teacher, it is important in a practical situation to be aware of the individuals in a group and their achievements, as well as the collective achievement of the group.

Teaching Example 3 and the Activity 3 suggest ways of providing feedback to your students that will help them prepare to perform in front of an audience. You will also explore how peers can assess and feed back to each other in order to develop their understanding and improve their work

Mrs Agholor hears from one of her colleagues that the school is going to have an Open Day at the end of the term. Parents and people from the community will be invited to attend.

#### Teaching Example 3

Mrs Agholor has been impressed by the enthusiasm of her students for the dance work they have been doing and decides to help them develop the dances they have created in class into a performance for the Open Day. She encourages them to practise at lunchtime and allocates some time during physical education lessons. A week before the Open Day, they perform for each other and give feedback on the strengths of the dances and ways they could be improved. She uses a series of questions to help them think about and improve their performances. They rehearse and perfect their dances. At the Open Day, everybody is amazed at how Mrs Agholor's students have communicated their ideas about how the brain works through their dances.



Finally, Mrs Agholor asks her students to reflect on the experience; this gives her valuable feedback about the learning process and helps her students to think about what they have gained.

### **Refining our dance**

Use the following questions to guide a discussion about each group's dance. Note that you do not have to follow these questions in any particular order.

#### **Creativity**

- Could you create more variation in your dance to communicate your ideas?
- Could you, for example, swap partners, change directions, use different parts of the space, use different parts of the body or vary the space between the dancers?

#### **Working with each other**

There are lots of different ways of working together in a group dance. Consider some of the following variations:

- working in groups within the large group, e.g. in twos
- swapping partners
- facing each other, dancing alongside, back-to-back or leaning against each other
- varying the distance between dancers
- creating a focus on one or more dancers at a particular time
- allowing one dancer to take the lead and the rest following

#### **Performance space**

- Do you need to adjust your dance to suit the performance space?
- How will you position yourselves in the space to start?
- How will you be positioned in the space when you finish?
- How will you move around the space during your performance?

#### **Awareness of the audience**

- Is it easy for the audience to see all the dancers in your group?
- Could you adjust your dance so that the audience can see it better?

#### **Other things to think about...**

- Does anybody in your group need extra support or help?
- Could you enhance your presentation by wearing similar hats, scarves, particular colours etc.?



### Thinking back about dance

You can use the questions here to help your students reflect back on their experiences. Ask them to read and think about these questions carefully and to answer them in an honest and detailed way.

1. Write down three or more words to describe how you felt during each of the following stages:
  - a – presenting your dance to the class
  - b – watching the other dances
  - c – performing your dance in front of the audience
2. What did you enjoy most about these lessons? Why?
3. What did you find most challenging about these lessons? Why?
4. What do you think is the most successful thing about your dance? Why?
5. Do you think there are any ways you could improve your dance? If so, how?
6. Which other performances did you like? Why?
7. Have you learned anything new about yourself?
8. What have you learned from the other performances?

- Explain to your students that they are going to perform at the next parents' evening and that the head teacher is inviting the community to come too.
- Before you begin, make sure that your students are aware of the need to work sensibly. Give them details of how you will stop them while working and remind them that they need to be aware of where their classmates are.
- Organise the class into groups. Ask each group to plan a dance based around a topic you have been studying. (You could decide this or allow your students to vote for one from a list.)
- Give the groups time to practise.
- Next, allow each group to perform in front of the class. Encourage your students to give each other constructive feedback that will help them improve their performances.
- Support groups as they think about how to improve and refine their dances so that they are ready for performance in front of an audience.
- Discuss any props or costumes and prepare these.
- Make a programme.
- Do the performance.

Discuss how it went together. What they have learned about dance? What have they learned about the topic?

## Life Skills: Investigating our place in the community

- 1 What makes a community?
- 2 What works well in a community?
- 3 Living together with different beliefs in a community

**Key question for the teacher:** How can you use storytelling and local knowledge and culture to enhance learning?

**Keywords:** cultures; community; role play; discovery; behaviour; storytelling

**Learning Outcomes for Teachers:**

By the end of this section, you will have:

- found out more about the local community through discovery learning
- used role play to identify acceptable behaviour in different situations
- used storytelling to develop students' awareness of different cultures

## Overview

Discovery learning, stories and role play are active ways to explore the different communities in which students live. They allow students to find out things for themselves – which is much better than you just telling them how things are.

The purpose of using stories and role play is to stimulate discussion and help students to look at their own attitudes and behaviour in a non-threatening way. Because these scenarios are more removed from the students' real situations they may find it easier to talk more freely.

It is important that life skills lessons do not preach, but help students to find out for themselves and think about their own lives and ambitions. You need to be aware that different children will 'discover' different things about themselves, others and their lives.



# 1 What makes a community?

Discussing and writing stories helps students to say what they think about different situations. Stories can be very helpful when you want students to think about difficult subjects. But it does take time to prepare them well; you need to think about the communities your students are part of and prepare your story carefully.

In Teaching Example 1, we learn about Mrs Otto who teaches Primary 6 in a large primary school in Kampala. She wanted her students to think about community relationships in their own town situation and then find out more about a rural community. If you work in a rural setting, you may want your students to explore an urban or town situation.

Activity 1 uses discovery learning to help your students 'discover' more about their own communities

## Teaching Example 1

As Mrs Otto came from a village more than 200 km from Kampala, she knows quite a lot about village life. From her own experience, she was able to prepare stories about her life there to use with her students. Using her own experience was important for Mrs Otto in teaching as it meant she was more confident about her subject knowledge.

Mrs Otto asked two students from her Primary 6 class to read out a story she had prepared about a village community in Uganda and then another two students to read one about a small urban community she knew. She had chosen these stories because they had many similarities.

After each story, she asked her students to discuss in their desk groups:

- the different activities the people carry out to make a living
- the people who help others in the community
- the problems of each community – which were the same? Which were different?
- the leaders of the community.

Mrs Otto asked the groups to feed back their ideas and she wrote the key points on the board. As a class, they discussed the successes and the problems of the different communities and how the problems might be solved.

For homework, she asked them to think about their own community. Next lesson, after having done some research each group of four wrote their own description of their community. Some students read these out to the whole class.

## Activity 1

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- Ask your class to brainstorm some of the main groups in the local community. These might include NGOs, religious groups, friends, family, community leaders etc.
- Organise your class into suitable sized groups. (This may be according to age or ability or another grouping.)
- Explain that they are going to find out about one of these groups.
- Allow each group to select a community group. More than one group can investigate the same organisation, as they will have different interests and views.
- You may need to do some research yourself or your students could do it to find out more about each organisation. You or they could perhaps collect some documents to help with their investigations. Each group could also devise a questionnaire and interview people from the organisation. Give them time to do the discovering, or research.
- Next lesson, ask each group to prepare a presentation on their organisation – the presentation could be written, a poster, a picture or any other display method.

For younger students, you could investigate one group only and invite someone from the organisation to talk to the class and together make a poster. You could repeat this at intervals so that your students find out about different organisations.

### **Suggestions for explaining the idea of a community to students**

A community is a group of people who interact and share certain things in common. Members of the community may live in the same area and may have common values and beliefs. They could share some common possessions.

If you are trying to explain the idea of community to your students, you might start by using examples they are familiar with. A good starting point is to ask them to describe their families, including the wider family of aunts, uncles and cousins. Help them to realise that their homes and families consist of individuals, a collection of people, living in a particular place – a small community.

Building on this, you can ask them to add in other groups that they interact with and who form part of the wider community:

- their neighbours, who live in the same street
- their friends, who they see every day
- their parents' friends, who visit them



It is this collection of different groups of people that makes up a community, and it is how students interact with these groups that contribute towards who they are and how they see themselves within the community. Identifying the different things that help define a community will help them understand the part they play in different groups. You might ask them to describe:

- the location – where people live
- the language – how people speak
- the culture – what clothes people wear, the food they eat, their religion
- the history – important events that have happened to a group of people

- **What is the name of your group?**
- **What is the purpose of your organisation?**
- **Which members of the community do you help?**
- **How do you provide that help?**
- **Who are the members of the organisation?**
- **Who can be a member of your group?**
- **How do you become a member of the group?**
- **Do you meet regularly? If so, when and where?**

## 2 What works well in a community?

Respecting others and behaving in appropriate ways between different generations is important in holding communities together. In your classroom, how your students speak and interact with each other can affect their interest in school and learning. Role play can be used to explore how to behave in different situations.

You will need to spend some time preparing appropriate role plays. Remember, the purpose is to help your students explore their own beliefs, knowledge and attitudes, and role play is a non-threatening way to do this.

Teaching Example 2 shows how one teacher used role play with younger students to explore the rules of behaviour in their families. Activity 2 uses role play to investigate community relationships.

### Teaching Example 2

Mrs Mjoli teaches Grade 3 in Cancele School in Eastern Cape. She asked her students to talk to their grandparents or other older family members and ask them about the rules of behaviour that are used in their families.

The next day, in class, they shared the rules from their different families and found that many were the same. One or two children had rules the others did not have, and they talked about why some families need different rules. They found that most of the rules were for children!



Mrs Mjoli chose small groups of students to perform a role play about one of the rules. This helped the class to discuss the behaviours shown and when the rules are used.

They found that there were sometimes different rules for boys and girls. They talked about this and found that there were specific tasks to be carried out by boys and different ones for girls. They felt that, mostly, the girls were not treated as well as the boys. In the end, the whole class agreed it was not fair and that the rules should be the same for everyone.

At the end, Mrs Mjoli explained why the rules are important. She also made a note in her book to plan a lesson on gender issues to further explore and possibly challenge the differences in the treatment of girls and boys.

**Family Rules example**

*Children do as they are told.*

*Girls help their mothers with the household duties.*

*Boys help their fathers and uncles on the land.*

*Children are quiet and respectful around old people.*

*Children leave the room when a visitor comes.*

*Children cannot play outside the home on Sunday.*

*Older children look after younger children.*

*Never tell lies.*

**Activity 2**

Prepare some role plays set in different community situations:

- Thabo meets the chief
- Mr Ntshona the storekeeper
- Danisile and his grandfather

Ask your students to act out each role play and have a class or small group discussion after each one. Identify the good or bad behaviour. Ask the class how the people in the story should behave.

Ask the students, in groups, to think up their own story to role play. Guide them to make sure they think of relevant situations. Allow each group to present their role play, and repeat the class or small group discussions to think about ways to resolve the situations.



### 3 Living together with different beliefs in a community

It is very important that as your students grow up, you help them learn to respect people's different opinions and beliefs. Stories are a good way of introducing ideas about cultural interactions and good and bad behaviour. Stories can help students understand the principles behind different kinds of behaviour.

To use stories well, you should include characters who behave in different ways. A lot of discussion can come from a well-chosen story, but you also need to think about questions you can ask.

The same is also true of role plays. By inventing characters and acting as them, students can explore the kinds of cultural conflicts that might occur in real life, but without suffering any of the consequences. Stories and role plays can help your students develop their understanding of difference in a non-threatening way.

#### **Intercultural communities**

As you help your students define their communities, be it their family, village or school, it is very important that they also learn to respect people's different opinions and beliefs.

Remind students that they are all individuals from different homes and families. For example, they might not all speak the same home language or mother tongue. Their parents may have different occupations: some may be labourers; others farmers; a few may be traders, nurses etc.

But also highlight the fact that they are all members of the same community, with a common interest. Because of this, they should respect the views of other people in that community.

The first stage of respecting other people is to listen to their views and recognise their value. When students learn about different people's backgrounds and beliefs, they will be able to respect each other more. They will not be fearful of cultural differences. They will also have a greater understanding of who they are.

Cultural differences can sometimes be a cause for conflict within a community. It is important for students to understand the reasons for conflict, such as arguments over property and land, behaviour, money and relationships. An important part of life skills education is finding ways to try and avoid conflict at school and in the community.



### Teaching Example 3

Mr Cole decided to teach his class about the importance of people respecting different members of the community and the roles they play, and the dangers that come from conflict. He used the story of the fight among different ethnic groups in Thokoza township east of Johannesburg to discuss these issues.

Before he told the story, Mr Cole asked his students to listen carefully and try to identify the original reason for the conflict. After hearing the story, they shared their ideas and he listed these on the board.

Next, he asked them, in groups, to describe to each other how the events had developed stage-by-stage. After ten minutes, they talked as a class and compiled the different stages on the board.

Mr Cole then asked them to discuss how they would have stopped the trouble by looking at each of the different stages and describing how they could have controlled each one.

Finally, he asked them to list the ways in which the three different groups contributed to the community and also interacted with each other positively. This helped them understand how each group was important and couldn't operate without the help of the other groups.

The students found this lesson interesting, and Mr Cole saw how they began to treat the issues seriously.

In the next lesson, the students worked in groups again to think of any areas of conflict in their own community and some possible solutions. They used the problem-solving skills they had developed when working on the story.

### Activity 3

Organise your class into three groups: each will represent one of the communities from the stories in the boxes below. Tell them that they will be acting out the conflict and then negotiating the peace, so they need to think through how they will do this. They will need to think about their community's concerns, and how to present these in their role play.

After 15 minutes of preparation, ask a group of six (two people from each 'community') to enact the conflict, as they see it, in front of the class.

Next, ask them to sit down and negotiate the peace while the class watches. Tell them to listen carefully to each other's points, and address these points in any agreement.

With the whole class, identify and discuss:

- the different concerns that each community had
- the different solutions that were reached

Ask them to identify the ideas they could use in everyday life. Which do you think were the best ideas?

Finally, ask them to write the story in their own words and add how the situation was resolved.



## Role Play Examples

### Thabo meets the chief

Thabo had a problem with his neighbour who kept letting his goats into Thabo's garden where they would eat all his vegetables. It had happened many times. Thabo tried to talk to his neighbour but he would not listen. His neighbour used to be very friendly, but lately he was often in the beer parlour and did not care much about his house or his friends.

Thabo decided to go to the chief to ask for some advice. ...

### Mr Ntshona the storekeeper

Mr Ntshona has a small store that sells food and household items. His store is a great help to the women in the village as it saves them walking so far to the next town. Mr Ntshona is the proud owner of a refrigerator and a generator. Now he can also sell cold things, like cool drinks and milk – even meat. The young people like to come to his shop to buy cola. One day, Mr Ntshona found that while he had been busy serving one boy with some sweets, two other boys opened his fridge and stole two bottles of cola. He was very upset and he decided to ....

### Danisile and his grandfather

Danisile's grandfather is very old – he is 92! He lives with Danisile and his three sisters and his mother and his aunt and her baby. Most of the time grandfather stays in his room or on his special chair outside the front door under the shade of the mango tree. He is often grumpy and complains about the noise the children make. Danisile's mother tells him they must look after grandfather as he is the head of their household. He has his old age pension from the government, which helps to buy their food. Danisile is quite scared of him and prefers to let his sisters look after grandfather.

One day, his sisters are all out fetching water and mother tells Danisile he must take grandfather his evening meal. Danisile is very worried. He takes the food and then ....



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