

Literacy: Non-fiction

Year 1 Reading

Non-fiction unit – Information texts

The focus is to understand some features of non-fiction texts; to describe, select or retrieve information from texts and use quotation and reference to text.

In shared reading, use *Ernest Shackleton* to illustrate some features of non-fiction books, and discuss how these features can be used to find information. Use the glossary to find definitions of any unfamiliar words.

Discuss the similarities and differences between books containing stories and those containing factual information. Introduce the terms “fiction” and “non-fiction”. Ask children to predict what the book might be about from the title and illustrations on the front cover and the information on the back cover. Invite children to ask questions about what they have seen or read on the book covers and suggest the answers might be revealed within the book.

After reading *Ernest Shackleton*, demonstrate how to use the contents page, glossary and index to find information within the book. Point out that there is no need to read a non-fiction book from start to finish. Explain that you can dip into a non-fiction book to find information.

Tell the class that you want to find out about *pemmican*. Refer the class to the glossary, using their knowledge of alphabetical order, to find the word *pemmican*. Read the word and the definition with the children. Suggest to the class that they might be able to find out more about pemmican and food by looking in the index. Encourage them to find *food supplies* in the index, using their knowledge of alphabetical order, then find the correct page and read out the information.

Repeat this activity with other words in the book.

Point out that, unlike a book of fiction, the information on these pages is not always reliant on the previous or following pages to make sense.

Year 1 Writing

Non-fiction unit – Labels, lists and captions

The focus is on using labels, lists and captions to consolidate the fact that writing carries meaning, and to support children in developing the concept of a sentence. Find examples of labels and lists around the classroom. Discuss how we could use these types of writing to build a classroom display about Ernest Shackleton and his expeditions to Antarctica.

After reading *Ernest Shackleton*, read some simple captions that are complete sentences and discuss their purpose. Turn to page 27 and talk about the artefacts shown. Discuss the purpose of the captions next to each artefact in providing more information. Demonstrate how to think of and rehearse sentence captions. Ask the class to help write a new sentence caption for Shackleton’s boot.

For example:

This is Shackleton’s boot.

Ask the children to extend your caption. Edit and scribe as the children volunteer suggestions.

For example:

This is Shackleton's boot. He wore his boots in the Antarctic.

Repeat the exercise with the other artefacts shown on page 27 and with words found in the glossary or index. Encourage the children to write extended captions rather than simple sentences, with capital letters, full stops and connectives, first as supported writing and then independently.

Year 2 Reading

Non-fiction unit – Information texts

The focus is to identify and understand organisational features of non-fiction texts, including headings, contents, index, glossary, images, labels and captions, to select or retrieve information from texts.

Introduce the book *Ernest Shackleton* showing only the front and back covers. Invite children to predict whether it is a fiction or non-fiction book. Ask them to suggest some features they expect to find inside.

After reading *Ernest Shackleton*, ask children to point out some key features of non-fiction texts and discuss how they are used to present information. Make a list of headings to illustrate how these are used to organise and sequence the information contained in the book.

Demonstrate how to scan the text to find information about the ship *Discovery*. Remind them to look for the name *Discovery* in the contents, index, headings or captions. (The information appears on page 8.)

Repeat this exercise by selecting a child to scan the text for information about *Nimrod*. Remind the child to look for information in the index, text or illustrations. (The information appears on page 10.)

Continue to practise this activity until the children feel confident about scanning a text to find information.

Year 2 Writing

Non-fiction unit – Information texts

The focus is on making notes from non-fiction texts to use in subsequent writing, by using headings, page numbers, key words and phrases.

After reading *Ernest Shackleton*, refer the children to page 8, "Shackleton's first trip to Antarctica". Tell the children that they are going to help you to make notes from this part of the book. Remind them that they need only suggest key words or phrases when making notes and that they do not have to suggest complete sentences.

Point out that the heading and page numbers are always noted first. Select a child to dictate these to you and write the information on the board as a shared writing activity. Encourage the child to suggest notes for you to write on the board. Remind the children that the information should be noted down in the same order as it appears in the text.

For example:
Page 8
Shackleton's first trip to Antarctica
1901
Captain Scott
Discovery
South Pole

Demonstrate how the notes can be used in subsequent writing.

Split the class into groups. Assign a different chapter for each child to make notes on. Use these chapter notes to contribute to a group recount of the life of Ernest Shackleton. Extend the activity by using the information collated to make a book or display.

Writing should show the correct sequence of events and include details to engage the reader. Consistent use of tense and correct use of capital letters, full stops and connectives should be evident in both simple and compound sentences.