

Section 2: Developing writing

Activity 5: **Headline words**

Objective

To select words and language drawing on their knowledge of literary features and formal and informal writing. (Year 6 Strand 9)

What's on the CD-ROM

Headline words

- Drag and drop short headline words to match longer words of the same meaning.

What to do

This activity follows 'Writing headlines', providing more focused work on substituting shorter words and revising for length and impact.

- Explain that headline writers have a stock of favourite words that are short and punchy – for example, 'rock' (instead of 'disturb'), 'vow' (instead of 'promise').
- Set the children to work independently on photocopiable page 29 'Headline words'. Then check that they have found appropriate short substitutes for the longer words by opening 'Headline words' from the CD-ROM and inviting the children to match the short headline words with the longer equivalent words.
- Distribute some tabloid newspapers to pairs; ask them to find examples in headlines, and to suggest what longer words might have been used instead. Write these headlines on the board, asking the children to provide fuller, more grammatically orthodox versions. Identify the words that have been omitted (typically 'a', 'an', 'the' and verbs).
- Share and compare headlines, focusing on word choice and the deletion of unnecessary words and details. Ask: *Which versions are the most effective? Why?*

Activity 6: **Lead sentences**

Objective

To make notes on and use evidence from across a text to explain events or ideas. (Year 5 Strand 7)

What to do

This activity recaps on the purposes and features of the lead or opening sentences of news stories.

- Revisit the children's plans for news stories to accompany the images from Activity 3 'School news'. Read their opening sentences. Explain that newspaper editors sometimes say that these sentences should answer the 'five Ws' of a story (Who? What? When? Where? Why?).
- Choose one of the potential school news stories identified in 'School news' and discuss its content, considering the five Ws. Record this on an enlarged version of photocopiable page 30 'Lead sentences'.
- Provide copies of news stories to small groups. Ask the children to read the opening sentence, identify the different bits of information it contains and record them in the table on photocopiable page 30. Then ask: *Do all the opening sentences follow the same formula?*
- Using shared writing strategies, compose an opening sentence for their school news story. Stress the importance of including key information, and of catching the reader's attention. Explore ways of revising and editing the sentence – for example, by re-ordering the information or by using more dramatic language.