

Alternative verbs

Objectives

To use alternative words that are more accurate and interesting than the most common choices. To identify and use more powerful and interesting verbs.

Background knowledge

Verbs are sometimes described as 'doing' or 'action' words. They tell us what actions people or things are doing, have done or will do. Children need to know about past, present and future tenses of verbs. A useful test of whether a word is a verb is that you can change its tense. Verbs are essential – every sentence must contain at least one. The shortest sentence possible contains two words, but one of them will be a verb, such as *Emma cried* or *He escaped*.

Activities

Through the activities in this section the children will broaden their knowledge of verbs and consider choosing the most appropriate verbs in different contexts.

● Photocopiable page 59 'Garden disaster!'

Ensure the children understand what verbs are, perhaps by miming actions for a variety of verbs. Not all the verbs in the passage need to be changed, so let pairs of children discuss those they feel could be changed to improve the report. The most likely choices are provided on the answer sheet (on the CD-ROM), but be prepared to accept suitable alternatives. One new verb may replace two consecutive words in some cases. Ask the children to highlight the verbs to begin with and discuss those they would change to improve the piece.

● Photocopiable page 60 'Television documentary'

Explain what a 'voiceover' is. Stress that this is about verbs, not adverbs, to avoid children writing *walks quickly*, *walks slowly* and so on. Tell them to avoid using the same verb twice and try to write verbs to describe the different types of movement each animal might make, for example a monkey does not just *jump*. As an extension ask the children to write their own voiceovers, using the work they have done on the sheet as a basis.

● Photocopiable page 61 'Exploring verbs'

Children often overuse the word *went*, so this activity draws their attention to a range of possible alternatives. While some of the missing words require fairly obvious verbs to complete the sentence, others could offer several possibilities. Tell the children to avoid using the same verb twice.

Further ideas

- **Voiceover:** Using the ideas from their television documentary sheets, ask the children to rehearse, then perform, a short voiceover for one of the animals. This could be related to appropriate video clips, where the original sound is muted.
- **Mime the verb:** Prepare a set of cards, each with a different verb written on. Choose verbs that can easily be mimed, such as *smile*, *clap*, *hop*, *frown*, *shrug*, *fidget* and *blink*. Tell a child to pick a card from the upturned pack and perform the mime for others to guess. Extend this by conjugating the verb into past, present and future tenses.

What's on the CD-ROM

On the CD-ROM you will find:

- Printable versions of all three photocopiable pages.
- Answers to 'Garden disaster!'.
- Interactive versions of 'Garden disaster!' and 'Television documentary'.