

# Word of the week

The Word of the week pages provide information on one word linked to each section in the chapter. Each word is described in some of the following categories: word definition, word origin, word family, alternative words, fascinating facts and activities. Not all categories are relevant to every word.

You can use the words as a focus to support your work on the different sections of the chapter. For example, you could create a display around it. The information is a starting point for a word focus. The words could form part of your classroom living word bank.

You could also use the word of the week as a springboard to inspire children to think about or research fascinating facts about words, find interesting quotations and to encourage them to use dictionaries and thesauruses.

## Epidemic

- **Word definition:** Noun meaning a rapid spread or increase in the occurrence of something.
- **Word origin:** From the Greek *epi-*, meaning among, and *demos*, meaning people.
- **Alternative words:** Growth, outbreak, plague, rash, scourge, spread, upsurge, wave.
- **Fascinating facts:** Joining the two Greek words *epi-* and *demos*, *epidemos* was put together to mean the spread of disease among the people. We have adapted it to become *epidemic*. *Demos* is also the root of our term *democracy*.
- **Activities:** Encourage the children to use this word in history or geography, particularly when studying the plague or other factors that affect populations of people, for example when looking into the effects of flooding and natural disasters.

**Linked section:**  
Investigating interesting and unusual affixes, page 35

## Sarcastic

- **Word definition:** An adjective meaning making scornful remarks that have or are marked by a feeling of bitterness and biting or cutting quality.
- **Word origin:** From the Greek *sarkazein*, based on *sarx* and meaning flesh.
- **Word family:** Noun: *sarcasm*.
- **Alternative words:** Acrimonious, arrogant, austere, biting, bitter, brusque, carping, caustic, contemptuous, cutting, cynical, derisive, disparaging, disrespectful, hostile, offensive, sardonic, sharp, sneering, taunting.
- **Fascinating facts:** The whole word means 'to tear flesh'. This was toned down to mean 'biting your lip' and subsequently became understood as 'making a cutting remark'. This word has similar roots to *sarcophagus*, meaning an impressive coffin, which actually meant flesh-eater.
- **Activities:** This can be used when discussing different types of humour in literacy when studying poetry. Make the links to ancient Egyptian history.

**Linked section:**  
Dig back to the roots, page 39