

Smoke Signals to Smartphones

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Text type: explanation

Topic: communications through the ages



Synopsis

This book looks at developments in communication from cave paintings to smartphones. It looks at how smoke signals, pigeons, horses, flags and Morse code were used before the telephone was invented. It also looks at early mobile phones and computers, and compares them with the technology we use today.

There is a topic-linked fiction book to partner this title, which is called *The Urgent Message*.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the book

- ➔ *(Predicting)* Look at the cover and read the title together. Say: *I wonder what smoke signals are.* Encourage the children to make predictions. Ask: *Does anyone in your house have a smartphone?*
- ➔ *(Predicting)* Ask: *If you want to contact a friend to ask them to play, how do you do it? If you want to speak to someone that lives a long way away, what do you do?* Say: *I wonder how people used to contact each other before mobile phones and computers were invented.* Encourage the children to make predictions.
- ➔ *(Predicting)* Turn to p3 and read the contents list together. Say: *I wonder what dispatch riders are. What do you think 'Flagging It Up' means?* Encourage the children to share ideas before they begin reading the book.

Vocabulary check

- ➔ As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example *d-i-r-e-c-t-i-on, s-y-s-t-e-m-s.*
- ➔ This book includes some more challenging words that do not conform to phonics teaching, as well as subject-specific vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to children. Explain to the children that these words may be challenging but they are important for the topic. Read these words for the children if necessary, to help build familiarity before they read the book.

ancient Persia pigeon answering machine universe

Reading the book

- ➔ Ask the children to read the book aloud and help where necessary. Praise and encourage them as they read. Where necessary, encourage the children to re-read sentences to focus on meaning.
- ➔ After reading p7, ask the children to suggest why it was important that people left these paintings on cave walls. Ask: *How have they been useful to us?* If necessary, explain that the paintings have helped us to discover how people used to live.
- ➔ *(Predicting)* After reading p8, ask: *Do you think this method of communication was very reliable? What problems might they have had?* Then read p9 to find out more.
- ➔ *(Summarizing)* After reading p13, ask the children to suggest whether they think pigeon post or dispatch riders were a better form of communication, suggesting pros and cons of each. Prompt them by saying: *Horses could travel to new places but there had to be a rider.*
- ➔ After reading p16, say: *It must have taken a long time to send a message using flags.* Ask the children to suggest some difficulties with sending messages this way.
- ➔ *(Predicting)* After reading p19, say: *I wonder which form of communication came next.* Encourage the children to make predictions.
- ➔ On p22, ask the children to suggest three words to describe the mobile phone in the photograph. Say: *I wonder what it would be like to have to carry that around all day!*
- ➔ *(Summarizing)* After reading page 29, ask: *What do you notice about the way the information in the book has been organized?* If necessary, point out that the information is given in time order, from 20,000 years ago to 2007, and then the future.

Returning to the book

- ➔ *(Clarifying)* Ask: *Why was it expensive to use the postal system?* Prompt the children to re-read p14–15 to find out.
- ➔ Look again at the photographs on p24 and ask the children to suggest some ways in which computers have changed since the 1960s.
- ➔ *(Questioning)* Ask the children to look back through the book and note down some questions to ask their partner about the information in the book. Ask partners to take it in turns to ask and answer questions about the book. Prompt them to use the Contents or Index to help them to find the answers to the questions.
- ➔ *(Clarifying / Summarizing)* Ask the children to summarize the main developments in communication, explaining why each different form was in some way better than the last. Encourage them to use the contents list on p3 to help them.
- ➔ *(Clarifying)* Tell the children that the Glossary explains the meanings of certain words. These words appear in bold in the book. Turn to p30 and look at the Glossary together. Tell them to look out for these words when they read the book independently and encourage them to use the Glossary when they read the book again.
- ➔ *(Clarifying)* Draw the children's attention to the Index on p30. Tell the children that an Index is an alphabetical list of some of the key words that can be found in the book, with references to the pages they appear on. Choose an example from the book's Index and tell the children that you want to find out more about it. Ask the children to use the Index to help you turn to a page that will tell you more about it.

Independent reading

- ➔ Introduce the book as in the Introducing the book section.
- ➔ Encourage the children to read the book as independently as possible. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise.
- ➔ As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example *c-o-m-p-u-t-er*, *p-o-p-u-l-ar*.
- ➔ This book also contains a number of more challenging words, which children may need more support with at this stage, but which enrich the topic. You can look together at the inside front cover for a list of challenging words. Read them together and talk about what each word means.
- ➔ Remind the children to use the pictures to support them when reading the text.
- ➔ For suggestions of questions to ask the children after they have read the book to check comprehension, please refer to the Look Back, Explorers page in the book.

Speaking, listening and drama activities

- ➔ Ask the children to work in small groups and to choose one method of communication from the book (try to ensure at least three different methods of communication are covered).
- ➔ Ask the children to plan a short presentation about their chosen method of communication. Explain that you would like the children to deliver their presentations to younger children in the school so they need to make sure the information is very clear and won't confuse a younger audience.
- ➔ Prompt the children to include information about the good and bad points of their chosen form of communication. They should also say what came before it and what came after it.
- ➔ If possible, ask the children to share their presentations with younger children in the school.

Writing activities

- ➔ Ask the children to look through the book at the small illustrations and speech bubbles that have been included for each method of communication. Explain that the text in the speech bubbles shows the good and bad points of the form of communication.
- ➔ Ask the children to work with a partner to produce their own small cartoon for the mobile phone. Ask them to include one speech bubble showing a good point and one showing a bad.
- ➔ Encourage pairs to talk together about the good and bad points of mobile phones, and to choose the ideas they want to include in their cartoons.
- ➔ The children can write each character's words in a speech bubble. Ask them to read the words aloud to check they sound natural, and like spoken words, and to check their punctuation and spelling.
- ➔ Invite pairs to share their cartoons with the rest of the group.

Cross-curricular activity

History

- ➔ Using library books and child-friendly sites on the Internet, ask the children to find out who invented the telephone. Ask them to make notes about the inventor and then share their findings as a class.

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Curriculum links and assessment

Links to Oxford Reading Criterion Scale

- Can apply phonic skills and knowledge to recognize an increasing number of complex words. (READ) (ORCS Standard 3, 3)
- Can locate some specific information, e.g. key events, characters' names or key information in a non-fiction text. (R) (ORCS Standard 3, 6)
- Can provide simple explanations about events or information, e.g. why a character acted in a particular way. (D) (ORCS Standard 3, 9)
- Is beginning to talk about the features of certain non-fiction texts (non-chronological report, information poster, letter). (A) (ORCS Standard 3, 10)
- Can apply their phonic knowledge automatically enabling an increasing capacity to attend to meaning rather than decoding. (READ) (ORCS Standard 3, 12)

ENGLAND The National Curriculum in England: English Programme of Study, Year 2

	National Curriculum objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
Spoken language	participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates (SpokLang.9) select and use appropriate registers for effective communication. (SpokLang.12)	Check the children work as a group to plan and deliver a presentation about one method of communication from the book. The information should be presented clearly and should be appropriate for a younger audience.
Reading: Word reading	read accurately by blending the sounds in words that contain the graphemes taught so far, especially recognising alternative sounds for graphemes (Y2 ReadWord.2) read aloud books closely matched to their improving phonic knowledge, sounding out unfamiliar words accurately, automatically and without undue hesitation (Y2 ReadWord.7)	Check the children blend the sounds in words to read any new or unfamiliar words, e.g. direction, systems, computer, popular.
Reading: Comprehension	making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done (Y2 ReadComp.2iii)	Check the children are able to talk about why smoke signals may not have been a very reliable method of communication.
Writing: Composition	planning or saying out loud what they are going to write about (Y2 WritComp.2i)	Check the children work with a partner to plan their speech bubbles orally before writing anything down.

SCOTLAND Curriculum for Excellence: Literacy and English experiences and outcomes, First Level

	Experiences and outcomes	Book-related assessment pointers
Listening and talking	When I engage with others, I know when and how to listen, when to talk, how much to say, when to ask questions and how to respond with respect. (LIT 1-02a)	Check the children work as a group to plan and deliver a presentation about one method of communication from the book. The information should be presented clearly and should be appropriate for a younger audience.
Reading	I can use my knowledge of sight vocabulary, phonics, context clues, punctuation and grammar to read with understanding and expression. (ENG 1-12a)	Check the children blend the sounds in words to read any new or unfamiliar words, e.g. direction, systems, computer, popular.
	To show my understanding, I can respond to different kinds of questions and other close reading tasks and I am learning to create some questions of my own. (ENG 1-17a)	Check the children are able to talk about why smoke signals may not have been a very reliable method of communication.
Writing	By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in a logical sequence and use words which will be interesting and/or useful to others. (LIT 1-26a)	Check the children work with a partner to plan their speech bubbles orally before writing anything down.

WALES Curriculum for Wales: Foundation Phase Framework, Year 2

	Framework objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
Oracy	retell narratives or information that they have heard, sequencing events correctly (Y2_OracList.5) speak clearly to a range of audiences (Y2_OracSpea.6)	Check the children work as a group to plan and deliver a presentation about one method of communication from the book. The information should be presented clearly and should be appropriate for a younger audience.
Reading	apply the following reading strategies with increasing frequency to a range of familiar and unfamiliar texts: - phonic strategies (Y2_ReadStrat.4i) confidently use all phonemes and their corresponding graphemes when blending and segmenting polysyllabic words (Y2_ReadStrat.3)	Check the children blend the sounds in words to read any new or unfamiliar words, e.g. direction, systems, computer, popular.
	express opinions, giving reasons, and provide appropriate answers to questions (Y2_OracSpea.1)	Check the children are able to talk about why smoke signals may not have been a very reliable method of communication.
Writing	write for different purposes (Y2_WritMean.2) re-read and improve their writing to ensure that it makes sense (Y2_WritMean.5)	Check the children re-read their speech bubbles to check they make sense.

NORTHERN IRELAND Levels of Progression in Communication across the curriculum: Primary Level 1/2

	Levels of progression	Book-related assessment pointers
Talking and listening	follow discussions, make contributions and observe conventions of conversation (L2_com_talk.2i)	Check the children work as a group to plan and deliver a presentation about one method of communication from the book. The information should be presented clearly and should be appropriate for a younger audience.
Reading	use a range of reading strategies (L2_com_read.2)	Check the children blend the sounds in words to read any new or unfamiliar words, e.g. direction, systems, computer, popular.
	express opinions and make predictions (L2_com_read.5ii)	Check the children are able to talk about why smoke signals may not have been a very reliable method of communication.
Writing	talk about what they are going to write and how they will present their writing (L2_com_write.1i)	Check the children work with a partner to plan their speech bubbles orally before writing anything down.

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL Primary English Curriculum Framework: Level 2

	Learning objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
Speaking and listening	Attempt to express ideas precisely, using a growing vocabulary. (2SL6) Articulate clearly so that others can hear. (2SL3)	Check the children work as a group to plan and deliver a presentation about one method of communication from the book. The information should be presented clearly and should be appropriate for a younger audience.
Reading	Use phonics as the main method of tackling unfamiliar words. (2R02)	Check the children blend the sounds in words to read any new or unfamiliar words, e.g. direction, systems, computer, popular.
	Make simple inferences from the words on the page, e.g. about feelings. (2Ri3)	Check the children are able to talk about why smoke signals may not have been a very reliable method of communication.
Writing	Plan writing through discussion or by speaking aloud. (2W06)	Check the children work with a partner to plan their speech bubbles orally before writing anything down.