

Classroom Activities

Activity 1: Using Words in Context

Objectives

1. To develop an understanding of nouns, adjectives and verbs
2. To help students understand that the usage decides the nature of the words

Level

Upper primary classes

Material

Appropriate text chosen keeping in mind the level and interest of the children. It would be helpful if a text in which nouns, adjectives and verbs occur frequently is chosen. The text chosen here is from the first chapter of the book *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling (given at the end of the activity here).

Board, chalk, notebooks and pencils

Preparation

Select an appropriate text. Identify the categories of words (nouns, adjectives, and verbs) in the text. Think about more examples of such words so that you can provide examples to the students, if required.

Procedure

The activity should be done after the children have read the story/chapter/text at least once. Ask the children to sit in groups of three or four. Make sure that the groups are not very big so that the children can read and discuss the paragraph. Ask them to read the selected paragraph again.

Once they have read it, ask them to identify the nouns, adjectives and verbs in the paragraph. You may help them by explaining that nouns can either be singular if they refer

to only one person, animal, place, thing or event, or plural if they refer to more than one person, animal, place or thing. In other words, we can make plurals from nouns. Also, nouns are preceded by adjectives. For example, in the given text “tail” and “shadow” are nouns because we can make their plurals and they are preceded by the adjectives “bushy” and “little” respectively. Adjectives are words that describe a noun and verbs are action words for example “scratched”, “yawned”. Also, only verbs can take endings such as -ed and -ing, although verbs with these endings can also often be used as adjectives. It would be helpful if you can write these points on the board.

Draw a table on the board, ask the children to draw similar tables in their notebooks and put the words in these categories keeping in mind the mentioned points.

Adjective	Noun	Verb
Bushy	Tail	Scratched
.....

Give the groups some time to discuss and complete their lists. Once they complete the list, ask them to use the adjectives in their lists with new nouns. The new words should not be from the given paragraph. For example, “warm morning”, “warm blanket”, etc. They can do the same with other adjectives on the list. Also ask them to combine the adjectives with the nouns that are on the list. Give them examples such as: cold evening, breezy evening, etc.

Draw the children's attention to the fact that there may be words in the paragraph that look like verbs but act like adjectives. Give them time to think and respond. You can add to their examples with phrases such as:

1. a) I need some **sleep**. "sleep" as a noun
b) I could **sleep** all day. "sleep" as a verb
c) **Sleepy** dog. "sleepy" as an adjective
2. a) Did you watch the **fight**?
b) Do not **fight** with her.
c) Did you see the **fighting** bull?
3. a) **Scratching** in front of others is considered bad manners.
b) He **scratched** himself.
c) The already **scratched** glass pane broke.

Ask the students to look at the list once again and to use the words in the list to try and make different sentences in which the same word appears as a noun, a verb and an adjective. When the students finish the activity in their groups, ask each group to present and write a few sentences that they have created on the board. They may be asked to relate the process they went through to make the sentences. Highlight any specific point that is shared by them. These could, for example, be what they used to think earlier, what they were able to understand while doing the activity, etc. Also emphasize that such categories of words are not rigid or fixed. They can move from one category to another. Sometimes they move keeping their form intact and at other times, there may be a few changes in the form as can be seen in the earlier examples. How the word acts in the text actually depends on the context.

It was seven o'clock of a very warm evening in the Seeonee hills when Father Wolf woke up from his day's rest, scratched himself, yawned and spread out his paws one after the other to get rid of the sleepy feeling in their tips. Mother Wolf lay with her big grey nose dropped across her four tumbling, squealing cubs, and the moon shone into the mouth of the cave where they all lived. "Augrh!" said father Wolf. "It is time to hunt again." He was going to spring downhill when a little shadow with a bushy tail crossed the threshold and whined: "Good luck go with you, O Chief of the Wolves; and good luck and strong white teeth go with noble children that they may never forget the hungry in this world."

The Jungle Book

References

- Agnihotri, R. K. & Khanna, A. L. (1996). *English Grammar in Context*. Delhi: Ratna Sagar.
- Kipling, R. (2013). *The Jungle Book*. Scholastic. (First published 1894, London, UK): Batra Art Press, New Delhi.

Rajni Dwivedi is interested in language and language teaching. She is currently working with Vidya Bhawan Education Resource Centre, Udaipur.

rajni@vidyabhawan.org

Activity 2: One Story, Many Skills

Holistic Language Development through Stories: Some Important Observations

1. Stories have the ability to hold a reader's interest, trigger his/her imagination and encompass socio-cultural and historical aspects of the world, which forms the very basis of language development.