

Treasure Island - Learning Resources

Languages of Old (up to 60 mins)

This exercise asks pupils to use their linguistic instincts to determine the meanings of old English words they aren't familiar with, based on contextual clues and their knowledge of grammar.

Who is it for?

This learning resource is for students studying Literacy at Key Stage 2 (years 5 & 6).

Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- Appreciate our literary heritage
- Develop their understanding of vocabulary and grammar
- · Understand the relationship between words
- Understand nuances in language and figurative language
- Work out and clarify meanings of unknown words
- Know that grammar is just the best words in the best order and that we can work out what appears to be strange because we can understand grammar.

You will need

Access to the production of Treasure Island in the On Demand player.

Activities

1.

Ask the children to define the terms 'verb', 'adjective' and 'noun'.

2.

Using the Jabberwock rhyme below, demonstrate that children can understand 'nonsense' because the understand the grammatical structure of language. Ask them what parts of grammar the highlighted words are in this passage:

Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:

All mimsy were the borogoves,

And the mome raths outgrabe.

National Theatre

3.

Now ask the children if they can work out what the words mean – they will use a combination of understanding the whole sentences and what it looks/sounds like (ie: Brillig is a bit like brilliant)

4.

Read aloud, or write on the board, a selection of lines from the play with words the children may find unfamiliar. Ask the class to identify what parts of speech the unfamiliar words are, and what they might mean. For example:

- Batten down the hatches
- (They regard a lit lantern) They left their glim here!
- This is a pleasant sittyated grog shop, and a handy cove!

5.

Show the class how a dictionary definition is constructed, and ask them to write a definition in the same format for one of the unfamiliar words they have encountered so far, guessing what they think the word might mean based on its context.

6.

Read (or listen to, using the link provided) one of the sea shanties available in the appendix.

7.

Ask the class to make dictionary definitions of three unfamiliar words in your chosen shanty, again guessing what the meaning might be based on what the word sounds like, the grammar of the sentence, and the words around it.

8.

Ask each pupil to translate the whole shanty into modern English so that every word is familiar.

Appendix

You wormy eyed wastrels
You crackle boned crew
Down down Haul the
Who howl at the moon
Who slither and slew
down down haul the other down
There's a tench on this island
If you dare to draw breath
Down down haul the other down
That sickens your innards and
Tastes of pure death
Down down
Haul the other down

National Theatre

The following two songs can be heard at http://brethrencoast.com/Sea_Shanties.html

Fifteen men on a dead man's chest
Yo Ho Ho and a bottle of rum
Drink and the devil had done fo r the rest
Yo Ho Ho and a bottle of rum
The mate was fixed by the boson's pike
The bosun brained with a marlinspike
And cookey's throat was marked belike
It had been gripped by fingers ten;
Like break o'day in a bozzing ken.
Yo Ho Ho and a bottle of rum

--

The smartest clipper you can find is, Ho eh, ho ah, are you must done? She's the Margaret Evans on a blue sky line! Clear away the track and let the bulgine run.

To my aye rig a jig in a junting gum, Ho eh, ho ah, are you must done? With Eliza Lee all on my knee, Clear away the track and let the bulgine run.

Oh the Margaret Evans on the blue sky line, Ho eh, ho ah, are you must done? She's never a day behind the time, Clear away the track and let the bulgine run.