HOW HAS COMMUNICATION CHANGED OVER TIME?

UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit, the children will investigate changes in the way we have communicated since the Stone Age.

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

In this unit the children will:

- carry out a study of history that extends their learning beyond 1066
- gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past
- ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments and develop perspective and judgement.

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

English: writing for an intended audience (Lessons 2, 6)

Science: investigating how things work (Lessons 3, 4, 5)

Art & design: exploring different techniques of drawing and painting (Lessons 1, 2)

Computing: finding out about the World Wide Web and its impact today (Lesson 5)

Design & technology: carrying out research to learn about inventions and their impact (Lessons 5, 6).

THE BIG FINISH

COMMUNICATE!

The class choose a mode of communication - audio broadcast, web page, newspaper etc - to communicate what they have found out in this unit about the history of communication. Alternatively, they could use their chosen mode to communicate their favourite period of history studied within primary school.

HISTORICAL SKILLS AND CONCEPTS

In this unit, the children will:

- create a 'bigger picture' of history – seeing how things fit together over a long time span
- understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections
- reach conclusions based on the evidence
- decide how to present findings effectively.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Was this type of communication for everybody to use, or only a few?
- How is this ... better than ...?
- Does this ... make things easier – or harder?
- Why might I use this ... instead of that ...?
- How significant is this invention/change?
- How do I decide if this ... is more important than that ...?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The history National Curriculum offers one unit that encourages children to continue to study a period, turning point or topic beyond 1066. This unit uses some of their existing Key Stage 2 work – particularly Stone Age, Iron Age, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings and Victorians – as a spine to explore how communication has changed over the last 10,000 years. Children bring existing knowledge about these periods to the unit, and should initially be reminded of prior learning, and use that as a way to explore new knowledge too – William Caxton and the printing press, mass newspapers and the vast changes of the 20th century and in their own lifetime.

Of course the topic is far too broad to cover everything, hence the final activity being to create their own class exhibition. They can use work from the unit, or other inventions not studied, to decide for themselves the biggest change. Terry Wogan, for instance, argues the case for William Caxton being the greatest inventor ever, when you consider the impact of the printing press. Perhaps Tim Berners-Lee or Marty Cooper in our time deserve the accolade too? As ever, there is no 'correct' answer. Each child's answer should be supported by relevant evidence and argument.

KEY VOCABULARY

Access a full online glossary for this course at My Rising Stars.

- **Beacon:** a signal light for sending messages, often on high ground so it can be clearly seen
- **Illuminated letter:** an illustrated image or letter to start a paragraph or page in a medieval book
- **Millennium:** the start of a new 1,000 year period of history, e.g. the year 2000
- **Oral tradition:** remembering things by telling stories, not writing them down
- **Replica:** a copy of an original
- **Printing press:** a machine for making books mechanically
- **Psalter:** a medieval prayer book
- **Saga:** a Viking story
- **Social media:** websites and applications such as Facebook or Twitter that allow people to share content with many people
- **Texting:** a way of sending a message by phone
- **Tweeting:** posting a message on a social media site
- **World Wide Web:** all of the websites that are linked together on the internet.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING AREA

Use the Independent Learning Area as an opportunity for the children to start work on the exhibition that is the 'Big Finish'. While they are studying each part of this unit, ask the children to select a topic and produce one item, guide or annotation for their final exhibition. They might, for instance, focus on cave art from Lesson 1, illuminated letters from Lesson 2, right through to one of the early mobile phones from Lesson 5.

Remember the aim of the exhibition is to show how the ways we communicate with each other have changed throughout history. As this is the final Key Stage 2 history unit, you should be able to confidently leave the choice of topic, examples and materials to use to your children.

ASSESSMENT

All children can:

- tell that the ways we communicate have changed over time
- arrange these changes in sequence
- decide whether one change in how we communicate is more important than others.

Most children can:

- decide that some changes in how we communicate have more of an impact than others
- realise how some changes build on previous changes
- explain why they think one change is more important than others.

Some children can:

- reach a judgement as to 'how far?' a communication reaches
- realise changes in how we communicate can have negative as well as positive impacts
- appreciate that there are several different answers to the question 'What was the most important change over 10,000 years?'.