

The Fire Monster

Poetry

Content domain focus:

2b retrieve and record information/identify key details from fiction and non-fiction

2d make inferences from the text/explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text

2f identify/explain how information/narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole

Text summary

The poem 'The Fire Monster' is by John Foster. The poet uses personification to vividly describe the way that a volcano builds in strength as it erupts. The poem ends with the perspective of local villagers as they wait for the volcano to die down once more.

Unit summary

Initially, the questions involve the children in finding key details in the poem to tune them into the content. The children are then asked to make inferences about the Fire Monster, based on the language used in the poem.



Teaching prompts

- Explain to the children that they are going to read a poem and answer questions about it. Explore their knowledge and understanding of poems. Ask the children if they have a favourite poem and, if so, what it is and why they like it. If necessary, explain the technique of personification.
- Discuss the fact that poets choose their words very carefully so that the reader can create a picture of what is being described in the poem. Explain that, when reading a poem, the children should try to imagine what is being described.
- Establish that the pictures they create will all be slightly different because they are each making inferences based on their own experiences, knowledge of vocabulary and reading.
- Remind the children that making inferences from reading involves reading between the lines, thinking about clues that the author has left in the text and linking these to their own experiences.

Revisiting the text

Ask the children to:

- paint a picture of the volcano
- take on the role of one of the watching villagers and role-play their reactions to the erupting volcano
- take an everyday object and use personification to describe it to a friend
- identify a favourite phrase from the poem and explain why they have chosen it
- prepare and present a reading of the poem.

 **Answers**

Links to content domain requirements are in brackets after the answer.

1. in a volcano [2b]
2. sleeping; mouth [2b]
3. The Fire Monster sleeps/stirs/wakes/roars. Also accept references to his nostrils/lips/throat/mouth. [2d]
4. The jets are strong/fierce. [2d]
5. red [2b]
6. fierce [2d]
7. in the village in the valley [2b]
8. They are afraid/impressed/excited. [2d]
9. Each verse describes how the volcano becomes angrier as it erupts. [2f]
10. The way a volcano erupts. [2d]

 **Assessment**

The children will be secure in their understanding of how to find key details efficiently and effectively if they use the clues in the questions, e.g. “Where?” and “What?” to help them identify the correct answers.

They are able to make inferences by thinking about what they are told about the volcano, what they can work out from the descriptions and by making links with how they would feel were they to watch a volcano erupting.

They understand how the content of the poem is related if they are able to identify how the verses describe the increasing power of the volcano.

Next steps

Create interactive displays that focus on words and phrases and their meaning, e.g. ‘zones of relevance’ (children choose which words are closest to a particular meaning or definition); sorting and grouping vocabulary, and then giving the groups umbrella headings that summarise their meaning or purpose.

To develop inferential skills, ask the children to ‘jump in’ to a picture in order to explore their senses and their responses to the situation in which they find themselves. Ask questions that start with “How would you feel if ...?” to develop their responses.

Explore the structure of poems by involving the children in summarising the poem as a whole and the focus of each verse.