

Guess and find out

Level: All

Age: 8-12

Organization: pairs, whole class, individual

Aims: To motivate children to read; to predict or guess whether statements are true or false; to check your predictions.

Language focus: *In the example:* weights and measures, present simple, *can* (for possibility), superlative adjectives, explaining and justifying opinions, *because*

Alternatives: any familiar language and vocabulary, e.g. was/were, past simple, dates, famous historical figures

Materials: *Essential:* texts for children to read, e.g. from the course book, junior reference book, magazine, reader or the internet / *Optional:* photocopies of true/false statements based on the text (one for each pair), a photo or picture to illustrate the text

Procedure

1. Divide the class into pairs.
2. Introduce the topic and show the children a picture if you have one. *Either* give out the true/false statements *or* dictate these *or* write them on the board. For example, for a text on blue whales, these could be:

1. The blue whale is the largest mammal in the world.
2. A baby whale is five metres long when it is born.
3. An adult blue whale can weight more than 100 tons.
4. The blue whale can stay under water for an hour.
5. The blue whale has sharp teeth.
6. The blue whale eats big fish.

3. Ask the pairs to decide which statements they think are true and which are false. When they are ready, ask them to report back and justify their views, e.g. We think number 1 is false because the elephant is the largest mammal in the world. Do not say the correct answers yet.

4. After a brief class discussion about all the statements, children read the text to find out how many answers they got right.

<p>The blue whale is the largest mammal in the world. When it is born, a baby whale is about seven metres long and weights nearly two tons. For about six months it feeds on its mother's milk. By the time it is fully grown, the blue whale can be thirty metres long and weigh 130 tons.</p>	<p>It can stay under water for about an hour before it comes to the surface to breathe. The blue whale has no teeth and is harmless to other fish. It eats very small sea creatures. In spring and summer it eats four tons of food a day.</p>
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5. At the end, check the answers (1 T 2 F 3 T 4 T 5 F 6 F). Ask the children if there are any facts about the blue whale that they find surprising and listen to their response.

Comments and Suggestions

- By guessing or predicting whether statements are true or false, children are motivated to read the text and find out whether or not they are right.
- The true/false statements and class discussion prepare the children for language they will read in the text and help to ensure that the reading activity is focused and purposeful.
- This activity works well with a wide range of topics, e.g. biographical texts about famous people and/or historical figures, e.g. Mozart, Isaac Newton, or descriptions of natural phenomena, e.g. volcanoes, icebergs. It is also suitable to use as the basis of a websearch activity.