

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Activity: Roald Dahl nonsense words

Roald Dahl is well known for his invented words which he used to keep readers engaged and to entice discussion on word meaning. On 13 September we celebrate Roald Dahl day which you can mark by engaging children in this nonsense word activity.

Encouraging children to make up and use nonsense words engages their imagination, listening skills and supports them to practice combining letter sounds.

Learning aims

- Listen to and use a range of sounds
- Use imagination
- Use nonsense words.

Resources

- A basket filled with a range of everyday objects that children will be familiar with such spoon, whisk, book, stone, cup, pen etc.



Activity outline

1. Explain to children that today they are going to have fun making up silly, pretend words and rhyming words that have no real meaning, also known as nonsense words
2. To introduce the concept of nonsense words, firstly share some of Roald Dahl's nonsense words with children, observing their enjoyment of the words and sounds as they hear them and try to get their tongues around them. Engage children in listening to each other's ideas about what they think the word could mean. Share his creations such as;
 - a. Gobblefunk
 - b. Frobscottle
 - c. Snozzcumber
 - d. Phizz-whizzing.

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3. Next, introduce the basket of resources. The idea is for each child to choose an object from the basket and to say the name of the object and then try to make up the silliest pretend word they can to go with it. The crazier the better – children will love making up silly words. Model this to children, for example, “whisk/trisk” “stone/spotaphone”. You may need to model this several times.

Extension ideas

- Encourage children to make up nonsense words as they play. Model this saying phrases such as, “This is scumdidlyumptious” or “Oh no the frumbots are attacking us!”.

NDNA products to support you with this activity

- Online course – [Vocabulary and early language skills](#)