

Literacy

Our theme will involve learning facts about Meerkats – their survival needs, their typical behaviours, their common prey and predators, and their preferred habitats. Once they have become ‘experts’ on Meerkats, the children will use their newly-acquired knowledge to write information texts on the subject matter.

Our main text for this theme, ‘Meerkat Mail’, opens and concludes with a newspaper article bringing the latest news from the Kalahari Desert. We will consider alternative viewpoints of the same breaking stories and have a go at writing our own newspaper articles about the events, including interviews with different animals/characters.

The title character in this story, Sunny, writes his family a note to say that he is leaving in search of a better place to live. He then sets off on his travels around Africa and sends letters and postcards home telling his family how he is getting on. The children will be reading his letters, looking at the layout and the use of more informal English compared to the Standard English register that was required in their information texts and newspaper articles.

As a class, we will innovate the focus text, so that Sunny visits some other, different places/habitats. The children will then write a postcard or letter in role as Sunny, telling their family back home just what they think of this latest destination!

Expressive Arts and Design

Design and Technology

The children will be set the challenge of designing and making a Christmas card that includes a pop-up, flap and/or slide feature for Sunny to send home to his family with season’s greetings.

Art and Design

The children will develop their ability to use line, shape, form and space in making observational drawings of Meerkats. We will practise these skills in the classroom and then try to apply them in sketching the Meerkats that we see at Marwell Zoo.

PSHE

We will consider how our main character Sunny is feeling in the story and how this affects his actions e.g. leaving his home.

We will think about how even though we are different we can work together just like the Hornbill and the Dwarf mongoose.

We will compare the different types of mongoose and think about what makes them unique. We will link this to our own experiences and celebrate our diversity.

Understanding the World

Science

In Science we will look at Meerkats as living things, and develop our knowledge and understanding of what animals need in order to survive. We will study and describe the feeding relationships of Meerkats so that we can begin to read and write simple food chains. In looking at Sunny’s home – the Kalahari Desert, we will explore the lack of/limited variety of plant life to establish the needs of plants.

In our linked text, Sunny goes off in search of a new place to live but he learns that no-where is quite as perfect as home. We will be finding out about how Meerkats, and then other animals, are suited to their habitats. In doing so we will be building on prior learning gained in our Year 1 ‘Frozen Planet’ topic where we focussed on Penguins and their extreme habitat.

In looking at Meerkat family groups, we will learn that animals have offspring that grow into adults.

Meerkat Madness



Enrichment

On a daily basis, we will watch Meerkats live on a zoo web-cam.

We will enjoy a Year 2 trip to Marwell Zoo where we will be able to spend time observing the Meerkats as well as participate in a KS1 specific workshop with a focus on animal habitats.

In the build-up to Christmas, we will read ‘The Jolly Christmas Postman’ which is a fictional text written in the same style as ‘Meerkat Mail’.

As part of our focus on letter writing, the children will have the opportunity to write a letter to Father Christmas, both in role as Sunny from our story and themselves.

Understanding the World

Geography

The children will use world maps and globes to locate where Sunny lives. This will build upon their learning from the previous year (identifying Africa in relation to the UK) and the involve using directional language and the four point compass to describe more accurately where places like the Kalahari Desert (where Sunny lives) and Madagascar (where Sunny travels to) are located within Africa. We will look in detail at the world’s continents and oceans within this context.

The children will develop their map work skills by devising a simple map with symbols and a key to show Sunny’s journey. We will look at aerial photographs of Africa to identify and describe (using geographical vocabulary) its key physical features so that we can include these, where appropriate, on our maps.

Where we think about our local weather every day, we will compare this to the weather in different parts of Africa. Throughout this theme we will keep a record of the temperature and weather in the UK and the Kalahari Desert so that we can closely compare weather patterns in the two places.

Mathematics

As part of our weather study, we will be collecting data on the temperature in Bournemouth compared to the Kalahari Desert. We will be able to compare daily temperatures, and record our observations using the <, > and = signs. We will also be able to use and apply our developing addition and subtraction skills to calculate temperature differences or increases/drops.

We will be using pictograms, tally charts, block diagrams and tables to collect and show our weather data.

We will be using directional and positional vocabulary in describing Sunny’s journey and then our route around Marwell Zoo.