

Craze of the Month March 2018

Chocolate!

Time for chocolate!

With Easter just around the corner, the shops start to fill their shelves with chocolate Easter eggs. Chocolate eggs have long been associated with Easter celebrations, with the symbol of the egg representing springtime, and new life. Cadbury made their first chocolate egg in 1875 and today 500 million Cadbury Creme Eggs are made every year; as a nation we'll consume two-thirds of these! Chocolate bunnies are also popular and legend has it that the Easter Bunny lays, decorates and hides eggs for children to find. With chocolate egg hunts, egg rolls and all manner of chocolate fun at Easter, it's no wonder we eat about £80 million worth of chocolate eggs at this time of year!

How can chocolate be used to teach literacy?

Utilising popular trends is a great way to engage children with literacy and learning. Our research shows that children who enjoy writing are seven times more likely to write above the level expected for their age compared with children who do not enjoy writing. Similarly, children and young people who write outside school daily are five times more likely to be writing above the expected level for their age compared with young people who never write outside school¹.

Our **Craze of the Month** taps into current trends to improve outcomes in literacy and make literacy engaging and relevant. The activities featured here relate to the English programmes of study from the national curriculum in England².

Using chocolate in the classroom

Chocolate is always a popular topic with classes! Particularly at this time of year, it offers a number of engaging and interactive opportunities to promote learning and literacy. The activities have been designed so that they could easily be adapted to mark other key historical landmarks and could be used in different subject and classroom settings. Students can apply and develop a range of literacy skills covering reading, writing, speaking and listening and be encouraged to think creatively. For instance, activities can be used on a cross-curricular basis; as starter and plenary tasks, for homework and extensions or in form time sessions. The activities are designed to be adaptable for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. You can print off the activities page and put it on your staff room notice board to share these ideas with colleagues.

Grab 'n' go

Activity one: The chocolate creators

Chocolate is a popular treat amongst children and adults but we often debate about the best kind. Challenge students to create their own new chocolate bar. They can plan a brand name, a slogan and details of the ingredients.

Examples:

- *Name: Fudge Friend. Slogan: Feel your taste-buds tingle with this tasty treat! Ingredients: milk chocolate, biscuit pieces, fudge.*
- *Name: Dreamy Delights. Slogan: Our salted caramel bites will get you smiling. Ingredients: dark chocolate, salted caramel.*

Ask students to present their ideas in groups or to the class. You could even vote for a class winner!

Optional extras: Ask students to create a detailed recipe, using full sentences to write out instructions. They should plan to make their recipes both clear and exciting. This can make a good extension or homework activity.

Activity two: The great chocolate word race

Tell students to write down as many words as they associate with chocolate in two minutes. Students can then share these in pairs and feed back on the most popular as well as the more unusual answers. You can encourage students to choose adjectives to describe chocolate as well as nouns they might associate with chocolate, such as 'wrappers' or 'sugar'.

Examples:

- *Easter eggs, pudding, caramel, toffee*
- *Tasty, delicious, sweet, creamy, crunchy*
- *Sugar, ingredients, milk, dark*

Optional extras: Ask students to put their words into different categories, such as adjectives, nouns and abstract words. Students can then create a sentence from the words that they wrote down during the two minute challenge.

Activity three: Chocolate acrostic

Chocolate makes a great word for an acrostic poem, in which the first letter of each line spells out a word. Ask students to come up with a poem idea where the acrostic word is 'chocolate'.

Examples:

- *Caramel that melts like magic in your mouth,*
- *Hot chocolate covered with a mountain of marshmallows...*

Optional extras: Turn this into a competition and ask students to write up and decorate their final versions. These can be turned into a decorative wall display to celebrate students' achievements.

Recommended reading inspired by chocolate

These books all contain chocolate in one way or another and this can be used to promote reading for enjoyment. There are examples of fiction and non-fiction with options for different ages and abilities:

Young adult/adult fiction:

- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl
- *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier
- *Chocolate Fever* by Robert Kimmel Smith
- *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

Fiction for younger readers:

- *The Great Chocoplot* by Chris Callaghan
- *The Dragon with the Chocolate Heart* by Stephanie Burgis
- *A Storm of Strawberries* by Jo Cotterill
- *Daisy and the Trouble with Chocolate* by Kes Gray

Non-fiction:

- *The Story of Chocolate* by Katie Daynes
- *From Cocoa Bean to Chocolate* by Robin Nelson
- *No Monkeys, No Chocolate* by Melissa Stewart
- *The Book of Chocolate: The Amazing Story of the World's Favourite Candy* by HP Newquist

Further resources

This theme provides a good opportunity to teach children about fair trade and sustainability. The organisation Fair Trade Schools, for example, has resources that can be used to inform students about where chocolate comes from and make good form time activities: <https://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/resources/>.

For parents who are interested in using their children's favourite TV shows, hobbies and games as learning opportunities, have a look at the National Literacy Trust's Words for Life website, which provides further ideas to help encourage children to read and write for pleasure: <http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/7-11>.

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The chocolate glossary

There are lots of interesting words related to the world of chocolate! Below are a few suggestions. See if you can write a definition for each term and an example of it being used in a sentence.

Words to define: *chocolate, sustainability, cocoa, delicious, consumer, confectionary...* Can you think of any more?
