

# Sentences make sense

## Objective

Y5. T2. S7.

To explore ambiguities that arise from sentence contractions, for example, through signs and headlines.

## Guided work

1. Explain to the children that sometimes when sentences are shortened, their meaning can become unclear. Give the children the example of several friends meeting for dinner. One dinner guest says to the others: 'We are waiting for Richard to eat.' Discuss why the meaning of the sentence may be unclear. Ask the children to explain both meanings of the sentence.

2. Explain to the children that newspaper and magazine headlines are usually made up of sentence contractions. Very often they do not make complete sense on their own and the rest of the report is needed to clarify the full meaning.

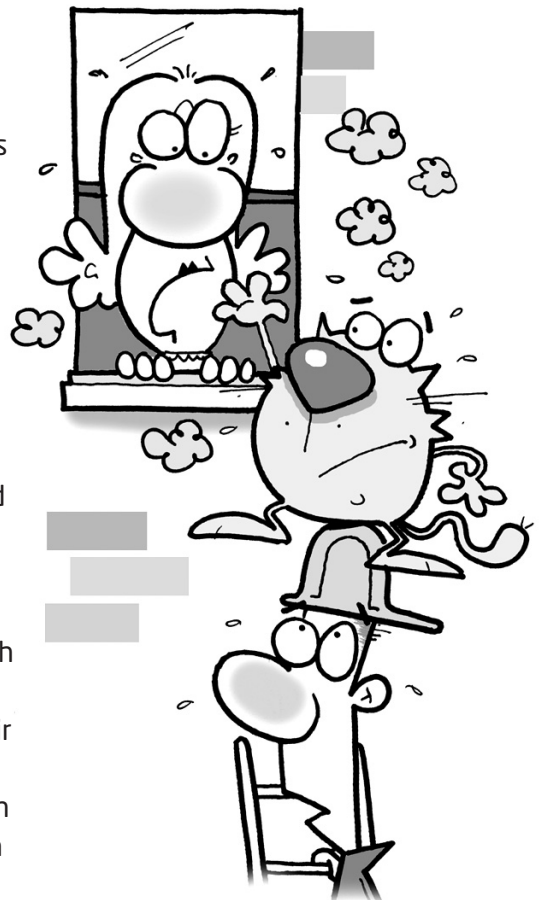
## Independent work

- Put the children into groups of three or four, and provide each with one of the headlines from the photocopiable sheet opposite. Explain that each group will perform two sketches, one for each of the possible meanings of the sentence. Use one of the headlines as an example to discuss and explain. This could then be given to a group that would benefit from extra support.

- Tell the children that one of their two sketches could be funny as it will show the nonsensical aspect of the sentence. Set clear guidelines about the use of props, noise levels and physical contact. Give the groups plenty of room to act out their pieces and a time limit of about 20 minutes to prepare.

## Plenary

- Ask the groups to sit round together as an audience. Watch each group in turn perform their two different sketches. Take time after each group to discuss the ambiguities that arose in their sentence. Ask the children to tell you how they knew which was the real meaning of each sentence.



## Further support

- Some children will find speaking and performing to a group very difficult and will need plenty of encouragement to build their self-confidence. The more frequently the children are given opportunities to do this, the easier it will become.
- Children who struggle with the understanding of contracted sentences could perform a headline search in a daily newspaper, giving them the opportunity to read the opening paragraphs of articles which further explain the headline.