

Nuffield Primary History

Old and new telephones: using objects and writing: pupils' work

During the discussions, Lynn the teacher had built up a vocabulary bank on the board for the children to refer to. She now asked them if they could write out instructions on how to use a candlestick telephone.

Below are some examples of what the six-year-old children wrote. The detailed attention given by the children to the sequence of operations in making a call are the result of the time spent working through the various demonstrations with the class.

To use the candlestick phone you pick up the earpiece and rattle the earpiece holder. By doing this you will get the operator you would say the number you want. The operator would hear your call on a set of head phone's. The operator would get a wire which comes from your home and plug it in to your friend's wire. The people in the picture are wearing skirts and aprons.

How the candlestick telephone works. First you pick up the receiver and you put it to your ear. Then you say the number into the transmitter. My number's 257298. Then the women at the peg board would put you through to the person you wanted. They wore head phones and a transmitter over their mouth. When you said the number your number would light up and she puts a wire into your hole and she puts the other end of the wire into your friends hole.

Yesterday Mr Verrier came to school to talk to us about telephones. Mr Verrier's own phone had a black base and a green phone with push buttons and the inside was black. There was a black telephone and a cream colour. My favourite was the candlestick telephone. It has a round bottom and a thick stick up the middle. The bit you speak through is called the receiver. The receiver is sticking out at one side. The transmitter is also sticking out at the top. This is how I think it works. First of all you take the receiver off its holder. Then press the holder down two or three times. Then you speak to the operator and lets say that your number was 596458 you would say could you please put me through to this number.