MACMILLAN DICTIONARY BuzzWord

TEACHER'S NOTES

anecdata

Overview: Suggestions for using the **Macmillan Dictionary** *BuzzWord* article on *anecdata* and the associated worksheets

Total time for worksheet activities: 60 minutes

Suggested level: Upper intermediate and above

1. If you intend to use the worksheets in class, go to the *BuzzWord* article at the web address given at the beginning of the worksheet and print off a copy of the article. Make a copy of the worksheet and the *BuzzWord* article for each student. You might find it helpful not to print a copy of the Key for each student but to check the answers as a class.

2. If the members of your class all have internet access, ask them to open the worksheet before they go to the *Buzzword* article link. Make sure they do not scroll down to the Key until they have completed each exercise.

3. Encourage students to read through the questions in Exercise 1 before they look at the *BuzzWord* article. Ask them to read through the whole article carefully and answer the questions. Tell them to compare their answers with a partner. Then check the answers as a class.

4. Ask students to complete Exercise 2 and compare their answers with a partner. When students have completed the exercise, ask them to correct the false statements (see the Key for corrections). Check the answers as a class.

5. Exercise 3 focuses on some higher-level vocabulary used in the article. Ask students to complete the exercise in pairs. If they already know any of the words, suggest that they complete these answers first, which may help them to work out the others by a process of elimination. Tell them to look at the words as they appear in the text and decide whether they are nouns, adjectives or verbs, which will help to reduce the number of possible answers. If necessary, allow them to use the Macmillan Dictionary, which has entries for all the words.

6. Draw students' attention to question 5 in Exercise 1 and the first paragraph of the background section of the article. Explain that *data* is now almost always used as an uncountable noun (also sometimes described as a mass noun, as in the article) and is usually followed by a singular verb. However, historically, *data* was a Latin plural of the singular form *datum*. (Note that the word *media*, also used in the article, is another example of a former Latin plural). Remind students that although *-s* is by far the most common way of forming the plural in English, there are a number of others, which they will revise in Exercise 4. Complete the exercise as a class activity, asking students to explain why they have chosen the odd one out (see Key for model explanations). Please note that in word groups 3 and 5, there is a different pattern than in the other groups. Group 3 includes the word *tennis*, which doesn't have a plural. Group 5 includes three words that don't have a singular form, whereas the odd one out, *shoes*, does.

7. Exercise 5 features the conversational activity of telling an 'anecdote'. Students start by putting the sentences in order to create an example. Ask students to complete the exercise individually, giving help where necessary. Then tell them to complete the notes and, looking at the example, think about how they would tell their own anecdote. Encourage them to use an introductory sentence to invite interest and to explain the sequence of events in a logical order with appropriate use of past tenses and sequencing words, etc. As a winding-up activity, students tell each other or the class their anecdotes.

MACMILLAN DICTIONARY *BuzzWord*

WORKSHEET

anecdata

Go to the **Macmillan Dictionary** *BuzzWord* article at:

http://www.macmillandictionary.com/buzzword/entries/anecdata.html

1 Find the information

Read the *BuzzWord* article on the word *anecdata* and answer the questions.

1. Where do we often find anecdata?

2. Is anecdata reliable? Why / Why not?

3. What does the word *anecdotal* mean?

4. What is an anecdote?

5. What word is historically the singular form of *data*?

6. Why is big data so difficult to deal with?

2 Comprehension check

Are these statements true (T) or false (F) according to the text?

1. The word *information* is very specific.

2. Most people read or hear anecdata every day.

3. The adjective *anecdotal* has been used for less than 100 years.

4. There is a singular form of the word *anecdata*.

5. Big data is related to use of the internet.

6. The world of technology is not interested in the issue of big data.

3 What do they mean?

Match the words from the text (1–8) with their definitions (a–h).

1.	hearsay	a.	weak and likely to change
2.	open-ended	b.	ideas or discussion about why something has happened or what might happen
3.	guise	c.	a particular way of understanding or thinking about something
4.	speculation	d.	without any limits
5.	slippery	e.	clever but dishonest
6.	tenuous	f.	the way that something or someone appears
7.	substantiate	g.	to provide evidence that proves something
8.	perception	h.	information that you have heard without having any proof that it is true

4 Odd one out

Circle one noun in each group that follows a different rule for plural formation.

1.	leaf	belief	life	half
2.	path	box	match	wish
3.	analysis	crisis	emphasis	tennis
4.	mouse	foot	hand	man
5.	glasses	shorts	trousers	shoes
6.	hero	kilo	potato	tomato
7.	body	baby	boy	family
8.	goose	sheep	deer	fish

5 Anecdotes

All the sentences are part of an anecdote. Write numbers in the boxes to put the sentences in the correct order.

1	I have to tell you about what happened last weekend!
☐	We left the theatre and went for a coffee nearby.
☐	On Saturday afternoon, we went to see a Shakespeare play at the Globe Theatre.
☐	At first, I wanted to get his autograph, but it was too crowded after the show.
☐	As we were watching, I noticed one of my favourite actors.
☐	I asked him to sign my programme and he let me take a picture of us on my phone.
☐	Then, as we were chatting, I suddenly noticed the actor walking past our table!
☐	I can't believe that I've finally met him!

Think of an experience that you had and tell your anecdote. Complete the notes below to help you.

The experience: _____

Where: _____ When: _____

Parts of the story:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

KEY

1 Find the information

1. in broadcast or published media (e.g. TV, radio, newspapers, online)
2. No, because it is based on casual evidence or personal experience rather than facts.
3. based on personal experience rather than facts that can be checked
4. a short story told by someone about a real incident
5. *datum*
6. because it is very large and complex

2 Comprehension check

1. F – the word *information* may refer to many different things (e.g. facts, casual evidence, personal experience)
2. T
3. F – the word *anecdotal* dates back to the 18th century
4. T
5. T
6. F – the world of technology is competing to find effective solutions for big data

3 What do they mean?

1.	h	5.	e
2.	d	6.	a
3.	f	7.	g
4.	b	8.	c

4 Odd one out

1. belief
2. path
3. tennis
4. hand
5. shoes
6. kilo
7. boy
8. goose

1. The plurals of *leaf*, *life* and *half* are formed by removing *-f* and adding *-ves* (*leaves*, *lives*, *halves*). The plural of *belief* is *beliefs*.
2. The plurals of *box*, *match* and *wish* are formed by adding *-es* (*boxes*, *matches*, *wishes*). The plural of *path* is *paths*.
3. The plurals of *analysis*, *crisis* and *emphasis* are formed by changing *-is* to *-es* (*analyses*, *crises*, *emphases*). There is no plural form of *tennis*.
4. *Mouse*, *foot* and *man* have irregular plural forms (*mice*, *feet*, *men*). The plural of *hand* is *hands*.
5. *Glasses*, *shorts* and *trousers* are plural nouns with no singular form. The singular form of *shoes* is *shoe*.
6. The plurals of *hero*, *potato* and *tomato* are formed by adding *-es* (*heroes*, *potatoes*, *tomatoes*). The plural of *kilo* is *kilos*.
7. The plurals of *body*, *baby* and *family* are formed by removing *-y* and adding *-ies* (*bodies*, *babies*, *families*). The plural of b*oy* is *boys*.
8. *Fish*, *deer* and *sheep* have identical singular and plural forms. The plural of *goose* is *geese*.

5 Anecdotes

1. I have to tell you about what happened last weekend!
2. On Saturday afternoon, we went to see a Shakespeare play at the Globe Theatre.
3. As we were watching, I noticed one of my favourite actors.
4. At first, I wanted to get his autograph, but it was too crowded after the show.
5. We left the theatre and went for a coffee nearby.
6. Then, as we were chatting, I suddenly noticed the actor walking past our table!
7. I asked him to sign my programme and he let me take a picture of us on my phone.
8. I can't believe that I've finally met him!