

## WORD MAGIC WITH MARY POPPINS

**Mary Poppins is a character full of magic and fun. In this activity pupils are asked to look at how nonsense words are an important part of the Mary Poppins character and what they bring to the story. Pupils are challenged to create their own nonsense words as well as explore and justify possible meaning.**

### Preparation

1. Prepare the link to the Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious song lyrics which can be found in our gallery on
2. Photocopy the activity sheet [Word magic with Mary Poppins](#) for pupils

### LESSON CONTENT OUTLINE

#### Introduction

Explain to pupils that new words enter the English language all the time and dictionaries are updated every year with some of these new words. The English

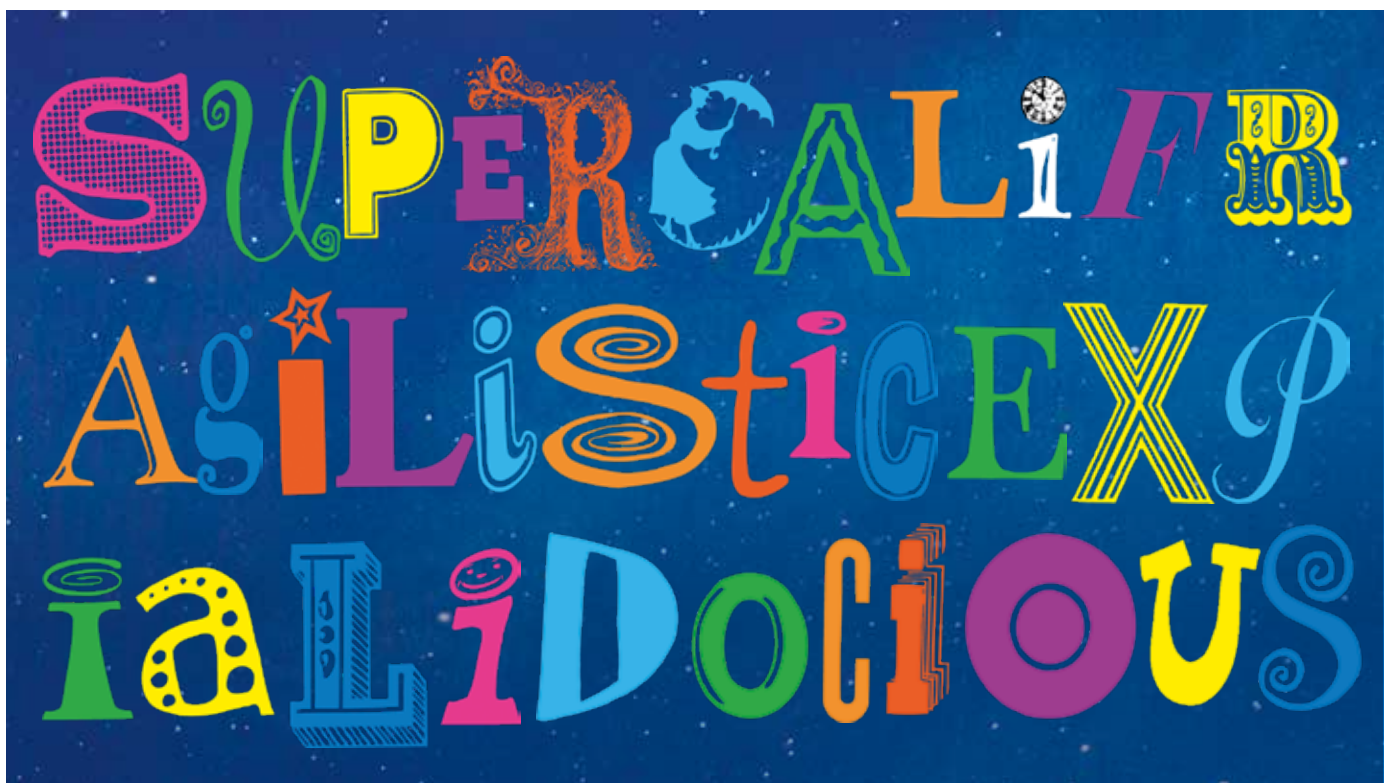
language grows so quickly because we like to play with our language and have fun with it, sometimes without even knowing we are doing it.

Now is the time to introduce *Mary Poppins* as a musical story, explaining that there's a wonderful song with the title of a very long nonsense word; SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPALIDOCIOUS

1. Write it in large letters on the board and explain Mary Poppins uses words and phrases to express herself or describe a situation. These words and

phrases have meaning even if at first they don't appear to make sense...it is also fun to make up words!

2. Ask pupils what they think the word means. To Mary Poppins it is a word to use when you have nothing to say, but it can also mean wonderful or amazing. Ask pupils to use it in a sentence.



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## Main activity

- Hand out the worksheet *Word magic with Mary Poppins* and explain pupils should make real words out of the letters in supercalifragilisticexpialidocious. Pupils should work in pairs or teams to find words and construct sentences using the words they have found.
- When they have completed the task allow some of the pupils to share the words they found with the class.
- Working in teams, challenge pupils to come up with their own nonsense words and give those words a meaning. It may help to pick the meaning of a word they want to create first and then work on the word. Encourage the class to be as creative as possible.
- Word development could become a class competition by asking each team to present their nonsense word to the group and asking the other teams to try and guess the meaning.

## Plenary

Write an advert for a nanny using some of the nonsense words created by the class. Mary Poppins is practically perfect. What magical qualities would a practically perfect nanny have today and why?

## Extension activity

Using the nonsense words they have created. Ask the teams to think about the context of the word, is it a noun, verb etc. Ask them to work out if their word can have suffix or a prefix, can it be plural and so on.

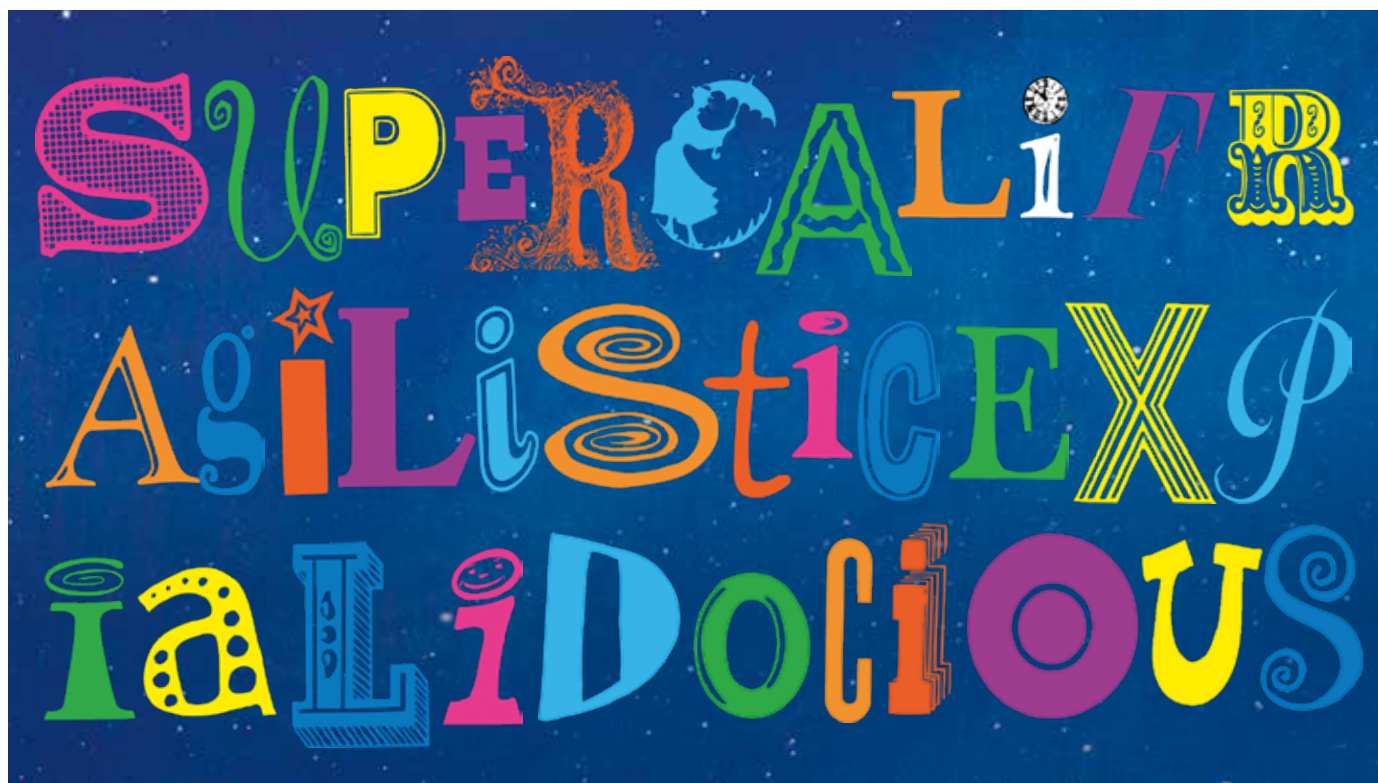
## Lesson objectives

- To learn that the English language constantly changes, with new words and phrases appearing all the time
- To challenge pupils to extend their vocabularies
- To improve literacy with word games

## Curriculum references:

English, also see curriculum connections grid – page xx.

**SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS IS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS MADE-UP WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. IT EVEN APPEARS IN THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY.**



# WORD MAGIC WITH MARY POPPINS

Name .....

Mary Poppins enjoys making words fun. One of the songs in the musical is a wonderful long nonsense word **Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious**. It is difficult to read so we are showing the word first followed by the same word broken into phrases to help you say it. Try it yourself!

## Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious

Super – cali – fragi – listic – expi – ali – do – cious

1. How many letters are in this nonsense word?

2. Now try to find shorter words from within Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

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3. To help you we have put the consonants and vowels separately, as consonants have to be put with vowels to make a word. The vowels are

A E I O U or a e i o u

There are the following vowels for you to use:

a  a  a     e  e     i  i  i  i  i  i  i     o  o     u  u

Here are the consonants in the long nonsense Mary Poppins word.

c  c  c     d     f     g     l  l  l     p  p     r  r     s  s  s     t     x

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Write down words you have made from all these letters. For example, you can spell 'gate' using an **a** and an **e** from the vowels with **g** and **t** from the consonants.

Words

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Now write two sentences using the words you have found.

1 .....

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2 .....

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**Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious** is a nonsense word. Now work with a partner to create your own nonsense words – using any letters – and put them in a sentence.

1 Nonsense words

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.....

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2 Sentence .....

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