

## Using concrete examples

**By Ashley Philipson**

I use concrete examples to model abstract ideas by showing a real-world example that demonstrates the abstract concept. Abstract ideas can be vague and hard to grasp - solidifying an explanation using real life examples makes it easier for pupils to understand and remember.

For example, when teaching the coastal processes of erosion and deposition, I explain these abstract terms to pupils by teaching their definitions and exploring how they are different to each other.

I then developed pupils' understanding of these abstract terms and unfamiliar vocabulary within their definitions using concrete examples, which in this case was coastal landforms. In geography, using a photograph of a coastal landform such as a wave cut notch (show image) or a spit (show image) to demonstrate what is involved in the process of erosion and deposition strengthens pupils' understanding as it gives them a chance to apply their new knowledge of the process to a real-life example. In geography this is often thorough a case study or photograph.

When using concrete examples, I ensure I present pupils with a wide variety to prevent them from developing a narrow understanding of the term in which misconceptions can easily arise. For example, if I only showed pupils one coastal landform where erosion had taken place, they may incorrectly think that erosion was defined only by that one coastal landform when in fact erosion can be generalised to many other landforms.

After I explained the concept using concrete examples, I checked pupils' understanding by presenting them with another landform and asking them whether it was created by erosion or deposition. I knew pupils understood the abstract concepts 'erosion' and 'deposition' when they were able to correctly identify it in unfamiliar examples.