

Primary National Strategy

Speaking – key teaching points

When teaching children to make extended contributions, encourage them to:

- make eye contact with listeners;
- speak clearly and audibly;
- use facial expression and gesture to emphasise points and refer to objects and places;
- use precise and persuasive words to convey meaning and hold listeners' attention;
- make meaning clear, organising ideas in a helpful order and making links between them;
- respond to others' contributions by adding or elaborating on them or by putting across another view.

Remember to:

- give children time to think before they respond to questions;
- expect children to provide extended answers that will interest others in the class;
- follow up children's contributions with further questions rather than repetition or ritual praise;
- choose topics that will challenge children cognitively;
- expect children to speak to the class or group, not just to the teacher;
- make sure children speak loudly and clearly so others can hear.

Children learning English as an additional language

For these children it is particularly helpful to:

- allow rehearsal time before asking them to contribute;
- expect more than one-word answers;
- provide models of appropriate use of English and reinforce correct usage wherever possible;
- ensure children become familiar with different ways in which words are used, distinguishing everyday and technical meanings, exploring common metaphors and idioms;
- group children carefully, judging how best to use their differing skills in English;
- check that children understand the key words and concepts needed for the topic or theme talked about.

At times, children benefit from using their home language, for example when getting their ideas together.

Speaking, Listening, Learning:
working with children in Key Stages 1 and 2

Speaking – making it work in the classroom

In developing their skills in speaking, children need to learn to:

- adapt their speaking to the listeners;
- use a range of ways to express themselves;
- use talk to clarify their ideas;
- sustain their talk to develop thinking and reasoning.

Speaking includes:

- putting thoughts into words and sharing in groups;
- taking opportunities to speak at some length to explain ideas in different situations;
- giving a talk or presentation using gestures, aids, rhetorical devices.

Children need planned opportunities to speak in a range of contexts, including:

- to different audiences, such as the class, the teacher, other adults;
- with different levels of formality, such as with friends, to another class, in assembly;
- for different purposes, such as recounting events and telling stories, explaining and describing, justifying views and persuading others.

Children need to be taught how to make more extended contributions such as:

- expanding ideas, using *because, so, if, but*;
- making connections between reasoning and predicting;
- using language to organise and sequence ideas.

Speaking – useful classroom techniques

Talk partners

To enable all children to participate in speaking:

- put children into pairs and allocate time for each to talk to the other at specific points in a teaching sequence, e.g. to share experiences, generate ideas, reflect on what they have just learned;
- retain pairs for a period of time, e.g. up to half a term, so that they establish routines, gain confidence and develop more extended turns.



Debates

Encourage children to stick to a point of view and to use language persuasively. Choose a topic where they need to look for new information and which allows for different points of view. Divide the class into groups to develop their arguments and reasons. They can either choose one person to present their ideas or organise the presentation between them. Share ideas for how to be persuasive in the presentations.



Predicaments and problems

Use opportunities from across the curriculum to focus attention on the language needed when problems are difficult to solve, for example:

- an historical figure at a critical turning point;
- scientists considering the consequences of a discovery, discussing pros and cons and ways forward.

As children talk they will need to weigh up alternatives, recognise conflicting points of view and negotiate situations. This can involve role-play.



Glove puppets and shadow theatre

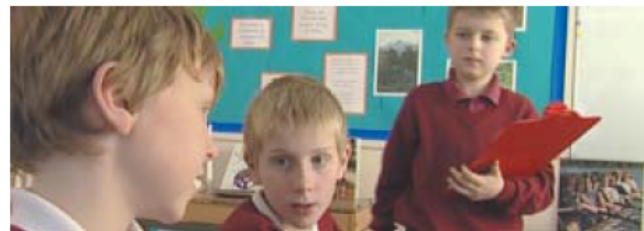
Puppets can be used by children to make and tell stories. Providing a tape recorder while children are rehearsing or developing the script helps them to go through an oral drafting process and understand how they develop and refine their story. Children can reflect on their use of language and voices. This technique can also be used to explain, instruct or inform.

Photos and paintings

Use photographs or paintings to encourage groups to construct a story or report. Help children to tell the story dramatically, using voices for characters and intonation for climax or atmosphere.

Use photos in different subjects:

- geography – photopack of a particular place or environment;
- design and technology – photographs of constructions to discuss how buildings are designed;
- history – compare photographs with artists' impressions of events and objects.



Just a minute

Give children a topic and ask them to speak without hesitation, deviation or repetition for up to a minute. Others can challenge when the rules are broken and if the challenge is successful the challenger continues the topic to the end of the minute unless challenged!

Radio broadcast

To focus on how to sustain talk without the help of gestures, eye contact or help from listeners, ask pupils, in pairs or small groups, to make a radio broadcast. The topic should involve explaining and reasoning, or trying to persuade listeners. After playing back different examples, discuss what makes a good radio broadcast.

