

Talk The Talk

CONFIDENT COMMUNICATION FOR LIFE

ORACY RESOURCES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Boosting self-confidence and communication skills

Speaking confidently and persuasively with impact

Nurturing aspiration, resilience and wellbeing

TALK THE TALK & ORACY

Talk The Talk is a charity that supports oracy cultures and strategies in hundreds of secondary schools across England and Wales.

Oracy is an umbrella term – encapsulating all manner of components of the Visual, Vocal and Verbal modes with which we communicate every day as human beings.

Students need opportunities to practice their communication skills in the classroom. Such opportunities will build their confidence and hone the all-important skills required to be confident communicators both in the classroom and their lives beyond.

This booklet contains oracy resources for the classroom aimed at developing Visual, Vocal and Verbal modes of communication. It also includes activities to develop Group Discussion and Listening Skills.

All of these resources take less than ten minutes – so are ideal to use at the start or end of a lesson – and will support the development of the oracy skills of your students and your whole-school oracy culture.

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CONFIDENT COMMUNICATION SUCCESS CRITERIA...

VISUAL

WHAT WE SEE...

Eye Contact
Facial Expression
Posture
Hand Gestures
Movement
Body Language
Appearance

VOCAL

HOW WE SAY IT...

Clarity
Pitch
Pace
Pause
Projection
Emphasis
Tone

VERBAL

WHAT WE SAY...

Stories
Facts & Statistics
Quotations
Jokes
Rhetoric
Imagery
Opinion

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Body Language Awareness - The Chair Exercise

Ask a volunteer to sit in a chair at the front of the room and instruct them to do absolutely nothing for thirty seconds.

Inform the remaining students to observe and be prepared to comment on what they see. After the time has elapsed, ask the group to feedback on their observations – prompting if necessary for comments on what they saw, both physically and emotionally.

Ask the volunteer to comment on how the exercise made them feel. Should you wish – repeat the exercise with another volunteer and corresponding discussion. Ask of the group – Is it possible to do absolutely nothing?

The feedback and discussion should establish that it is not possible, and inform all students that they are always giving off visual signals that link to their emotions – signals that can be read by others in a variety of life situations e.g. Training/University/Job Interviews – and therefore, one must be aware of the signals we are expressing visually.

Eyeball to Eyeball

The aim of this exercise is to raise an awareness of and improve eye contact when speaking in front of others.

Ask a volunteer to talk about anything – it could be subject specific, an anecdote or simply about what they had for breakfast. The speaker aims to make eye contact with everyone else in the classroom as they speak. When an audience member registers that eye contact has been made, they raise their hand, or stand up / sit down.

Teachers can introduce a competitive element by timing students to see who can accomplish this in the fastest time. This exercise should be time specific and fast moving – the faster the better!

This exercise can be employed to ascertain knowledge retention after a specific subject has been covered in the curriculum by making this the topic of each talk.

Visual Line Up

This exercise is designed to encourage visual communication – and be a fun end to a lesson.

Without speaking, or making any noise – students are asked to line up according to a certain criteria determined by the teacher. The criteria can be simple, such as shoe size, or requiring visual decision making, such as hair colour. This exercise can be repeated several times and often provides a way to encourage people to make decisions, communicate visually and take on different leadership roles.

VOCAL COMMUNICATION

Fillers Beware

This exercise is designed to promote fluent talk, and avoid the use of filler phrases such as 'like', 'you know what I mean', 'err...' and 'umm...'

Ask a volunteer to talk about anything for one minute – it could be subject specific, an anecdote or simply about what they had for breakfast.

Students are given one point for every second they speak for, but will lose a point for every 'filler' phrase they use. A student who speaks for sixty seconds without any filler phrases will score 60 points. A student who runs out of material at forty five seconds, and uses five 'filler' phrases will score 40 points.

This exercise can be employed to ascertain knowledge retention after a specific subject has been covered in the curriculum.

Understanding Tone

Ask all students to stand and say 'O' – following your directions below to highlight the importance of voice inflection and tone to the meaning of words.

Shock / Pleasure / Questioning / Doubt / Displeasure / Detachment / Resentment / Anticipation / Surprise / Meaning the letter in the alphabet between n and p.

If students can change the tone of a single letter of the alphabet with such ease, they should always consider adapting their tone appropriately for group discussions.

Ask all students to use the phrase 'I don't agree...' and deliver it with the following tone:

Aggressive / Polite / Sad / Confused / Doubt / Displeasure / Resentment / Surprise

Pace Yourself

This exercise is designed to reinforce learning through topic revision – and to encourage students to vary pace when speaking in front of others. It requires a visual count down timer projected onto the board.

Students are provided with a piece of text – it can be anything at all – subject specific, revision orientated, introducing a new concept – and students selected read aloud to their peers. Their objective is to read it aloud and complete the text provided as the time hits zero – not before, and not after!

The teacher can vary the timer – having students read the same material in 15/30/45/60 seconds to encourage variance of pace and use of pause.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The Extended Answer

This exercise helps to develop extended answers from students.

Students are not allowed to answer any questions posed with the words 'yes' or 'no'. A volunteer student is seated whilst their peers pose questions. When the student in the chair makes a mistake and uses one of these words, then another student replaces them.

This exercise can be fun – with questions relating to anything – or can be subject specific – with the teacher providing a series of questions for students to ask the volunteer.

This exercise can be employed to ascertain knowledge retention after a specific subject has been covered in the curriculum.

Questions Questions...

This exercise encourages students to develop their oracy skills by asking questions.

A student sits with their back to the whiteboard. The teacher writes a key word from a recent topic of study on the board.

The student must ask a series of questions of their peers to determine what the key word is.

This exercise supports both the questioner and those being questioned to ascertain knowledge surrounding a specific area of study.

Opinion Walk

This exercise is designed to develop the use of persuasive devices and offering an opinion. Place 'Agree' and 'Disagree' signposts at either side of the room. Ask students to stand in the centre of the room.

The teacher offers a statement relevant to learning that has taken place and students are asked to position themselves on either side of the room – indicating whether they agree or disagree with the statement. Students may opt to stand in the centre of the room should that see both sides of the discussion.

Ask students to give reasons for their choice – and to offer detail to their explanation. Monitor if students change positions following the input of others – and question those students as to why they have changed from their original position.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Answers First

This exercise focuses on small group discussion in the classroom following a subject-specific scheme of work to ascertain and embed knowledge retention.

At the conclusion of a particular subject or scheme of work, students are equipped with answers relating to the topic studied. Their task is to discuss and formulate, from their knowledge of the topic, the types of questions to which these answers apply.

Groups will then present and explain their findings to the rest of the group.

This exercise supports embedding of knowledge through group and class discussion, and helps teachers to identify any knowledge gaps that require filling.

Image Link

This exercise is designed to encourage deeper thought about specific learning and to discuss that learning in small groups and as a class.

The teacher put students into small groups and issues them with 4 images that are related to the topic covered. Students have to discuss and identify what the images are, explain how they are linked, and present their findings to their peers.

An alternative is to include one image that is not linked, and for students to also explain how they came to the decision that this image was not related to the others.

Verbal Tennis

This exercise is designed to ascertain knowledge of topic-specific vocabulary and is completed in pairs.

The teacher provided a given topic or category. Students, in their pairs, take it in turns to say the words that they know associated with this topic. If a student misses a turn, or uses a word not related to the topic or category, they start again with a new 'tennis serve'. This can be played as a competition between pairs or between small groups.

The teacher can ask students to write down the words they used in their game, and share with the class at the end, to ensure that all students hear and note the topic-specific vocabulary.

LISTENING ACTIVITIES

Story Share

The aim of this exercise is for students to focus on listening to the detail within what others say.

Students are put into pairs – and labeled 'A' and 'B'. Student A tells Student B a story about a real life event that they have experienced. Student B listens to the detail. The story can be about anything.

Once complete, Student B tells Student A a story about a real-life event that they have experienced. Student A listens to the detail.

Once complete, each student finds a completely new partner – and repeats the exercise – but this time, telling the story that they have just heard as if it were their own. This can be repeated numerous times.

Once exchanges have taken place several times – students then tell the whole group the final story they listened to as if it happened to them – and the originator of the story has to identify themselves and explain whether the retelling was accurate – or if there were anomalies.

Spot The Falsehood

This exercise is designed to ascertain retained knowledge at the conclusion of a lesson, and identify and gaps in knowledge that need further clarification, and discover who has been listening!

The teacher prepares a set of statements concerning the content of the lesson in advance. The teacher then reads the statements and chooses students to respond as to whether the statement is true or false – and explain students to justify their answer. If false, call upon students to supply a true statement.

The whole exercise could be flipped – and students have a few minutes to create their own statements before presenting them to their peers and continuing in the same fashion.

Registration

This exercise takes the simple act of registering your students and turns it into a listening exercise.

Rather than students answering their names with 'Here...' students are posed a question that they must answer when their name is called. It could be as simple as, 'Name a famous film star / sports player / film...' or it can be related to the learning that took place in the previous lesson.

Duplication is NOT allowed – ensuring all students listen to their peers to avoid this. Also, the teacher needs to start the register at different points each time, otherwise Andrew Andrews will always go first!

Talk The Talk – Supporting Your Oracy Strategy

We're a charity providing staff and students with a range of practical oracy workshops - all delivered by professional experts and qualified teachers, especially trained in the use of oracy as an educational tool.

Our workshops hone skills and support a consistent approach to oracy being employed in all subjects throughout your school.

Talk The Talk Teacher CPD	Staff
Talk About Transition	Years 6-7
Talk About Communication	Years 7-11
Talk About Communication Plus	Years 8-11
Talk About The Future	Years 11-13

Follow-Up Resources

Talk The Talk's support doesn't end with our workshops. Use free videos, lesson plans and classroom resources from our website – www.talkthetalkuk.org – to build on what we've started.

Measuring Impact

After the workshops, a personalised data report detailing the progress made by your students will be provided. Our workshops are regularly evaluated by external experts.

Bespoke Workshops

You tell us what oracy gap you're trying to address so that we can create a bespoke workshop for your students.

We are delighted that our funder, Four Acre Trust, shares our vision. **We can apply for a grant on behalf of your school to fund 50% of your student workshop costs.** Let's see how we can work together to help your students become communicators for life.

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ORACY
NETWORK



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