Voice 21
Springboards for Talk

Springboards for talk are simple yet effective activities that will support your students to learn both to and through talk. Each of these springboards have been tried and tested by teachers in a range of different settings; they are most effective when adapted to fit the age and needs of your students.

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Contents

The Oracy Benchmarks

When using a springboard for talk in your classroom, consider how you will meet the Oracy Teacher Benchmarks.

1

SETS HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ORACY

— When introducing a springboard, model the talk you expect from students.
— Scaffold tasks where appropriate to lift the quality of talk e.g. providing sentence stems to scaffold students' contributions.

2

VALUES EVERY VOICE

— Be sure to give your students recognition for their oracy skills. You might praise them for good quality group work, listening to other members of the class or a well reasoned argument.
— You know your class best. Use this knowledge to adapt tasks to suit the needs of your learners. For example, if you have a student who is new to English or reluctant to speak, you could let them observe an activity before asking them to participate.

3

TEACHES ORACY EXPLICITLY

— Use resources such as Discussion Guidelines, the Listening Ladder and Student Talk Tactics to teach students the oracy skills needed to participate successfully in a particular oracy task.
— Refer to the Oracy Framework when using a springboard for talk. Each springboard has a section which gives suggestions on how to embed the strands of the Oracy Framework.

4

HARNESS ORACY TO ELEVATE LEARNING

— Think carefully about how to adapt each springboard for different curriculum areas. For example, Concept Cartoons work well in just about every subject but you'll need to consider how to adapt the discussion point to engender the type of discussion required in a particular subject area.

5

APPRAISES PROGRESS IN ORACY

— As well as giving students feedback yourself, teach your students to give each other feedback on their oracy skills. Model the type of feedback you would like students to give or provide sentence stems to scaffold their feedback. You could also use a tool like Talk Detectives to prompt feedback.

Concept Cartoons

What are they?

Concept Cartoons, created by Brenda Keogh and Stuart Naylor, are an excellent springboard for talk in any subject. They feature a range of characters offering different ideas or opinions on a given subject. The cartoons often contain common misconceptions or a controversial statement, promoting students to address these through talk and providing an ideal way for them to apply knowledge and develop understanding together, choosing which character they most agree with and why.
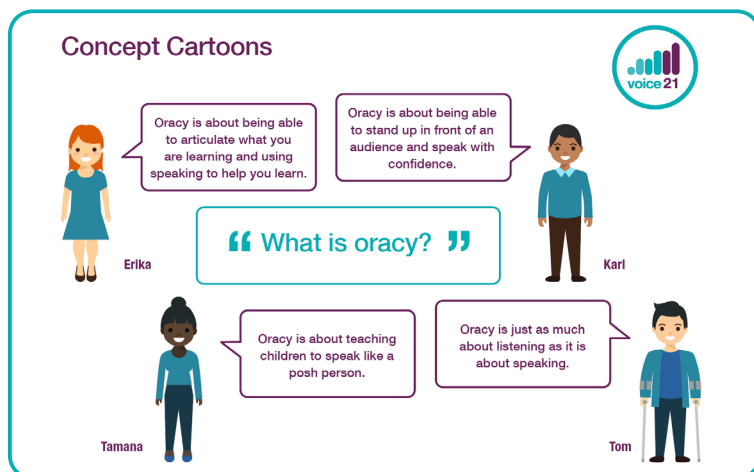
Developing oracy skills

- Ensure your students use the language of reasoning and justification to support their opinion.
- Include ambitious subject-specific vocabulary in the Concept Cartoon to prompt students to use this during their own contributions.

- Introduce Student Talk Tactics to encourage students to challenge, build on and probe each other's opinions on who they agree with as well as instigating their own ideas.
- Ask students to address the misconception or controversial statement through talk, providing an ideal way for students to apply their knowledge and develop their understanding.

- Support students to listen to each group and issue specific praise for how they have structured and presented their argument or opinion on the statement.

- Encourage students to speak at an appropriate volume for a small group discussion.

TOP TIP

Think carefully about how to use the different characters' "voices" to surface misconceptions and prompt students to address these.

Would you rather...?

What is it?

Originally used as an ice-breaker, *Would you rather...?* is an excellent way to get students talking and practising important reasoning skills whilst also having fun. You could use *Would you rather...?* questions at the beginning of a lesson as a warm-up, to get students talking at break times or even as a way in to a weightier discussion in class.
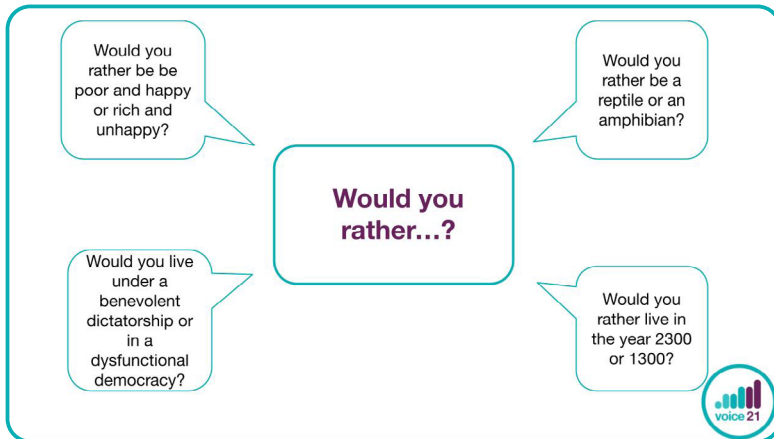
Embedding oracy skills

- Ensure students use the language of reasoning and justification to explain which option they would rather choose and why.
- Include ambitious subject-specific vocabulary in your *Would you rather...?* question to prompt students to use this during their own contributions.

- Ask students to apply their own knowledge, providing pros and cons for each choice, before deciding on an answer.
- Introduce Student Talk Tactics to encourage students to challenge and build on each other's answers.

- Ensure students listen carefully to each other's responses
- Praise students for their oracy skills, for example, for how they have structured and presented their argument or opinion

- Encourage students to speak at an appropriate volume for a small group discussion.

TOP TIP **Ask your students to create their own Would you rather...? questions for the class to discuss.**

Talking Points

What are they?

Talking Points, developed by Lyn Dawes, are a set of controversial, thought-provoking, sometimes factually incorrect statements related to a given topic which promote discussion. Talking Points are phrased as discussion points rather than questions, encouraging students to share their thoughts rather than trying to give a 'correct' answer.

Example: To multiply a number, you just add a zero

Talking Points

Science

- The heavier an object, the faster it will fall
- Trees can breathe

English

- The purpose of a story is to entertain the reader
- There is no place for flowery prose in nonfiction writing

Maths

- There is no point learning times tables when you can just use a calculator
- To multiply a number, you just add a zero

Embedding oracy skills

- — Ensure students use the language of reasoning and justification to explain their stance on each Talking Point.
- — Include ambitious subject-specific vocabulary in each of the Talking Points to prompt students to use this during their own contributions.

- — Ask students to apply their own knowledge and reasoning to each Talking Point, using this evidence to reach a consensus.
- — Introduce Student Talk Tactics to encourage students to challenge and probe each other's opinions on the Talking Points as well as instigating their own ideas.

- — Use a tool such as Talk Detectives to monitor other students' conversations and feed back to the class on how the discussions went.
- — Scaffold turn taking by asking students to choose their talk protocol beforehand; for example: putting their thumb up if they have an opinion to share about a particular Talking Point.

- — Encourage students to speak at an appropriate volume for a small group discussion.

TOP TIP

Promote independence by providing 2-3 Talking Points. Ask students to move onto the next one once they're ready, making it clear that individual groups may end up discussing a different number of Talking Points.

Consensus Circle

What is it?

A Consensus Circle is a great way to encourage a group of students to discuss their ideas, resulting in them reaching a consensus or a generally accepted opinion. By requiring students to come to a consensus, you are challenging them to synthesise and evaluate their group's thinking, which moves their discussion beyond a simple sharing of ideas. Students should generate their own ideas then work collaboratively to come to a shared agreement by looking out for commonalities and comparing ideas, negotiating and being willing to make concessions. Only ideas that all students agree upon should be put in the circle.
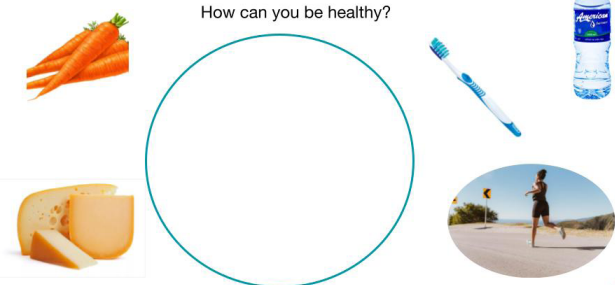

Consensus Circle

Discussion point: Which line or phrase do you think gets to the heart of the text? Why?

- I think… because…
- I agree/disagree because…
- X's point is interesting because… and I also think that…
- On the one hand…. but on the other hand…
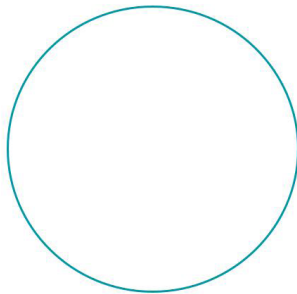
I am learning how to be healthy

How can you be healthy?

Embedding oracy skills

- Ensure students use the language of reasoning and negotiation to justify why their ideas should move into the inner circle.
- Include ambitious subject-specific vocabulary when modelling talk, prompting students to use this during their own contributions.

- Teach students explicitly what it means to reach a shared agreement and how to get there; looking out for commonalities, negotiating and changing their opinions when appropriate.
- Introduce Student Talk Tactics to encourage students to challenge, build on and probe each other's ideas as well as summarising the ideas of the group.

- Explain to students that, to reach consensus, they must be willing to make concessions.

- Encourage students to speak at an appropriate volume for a small group discussion.

TOP TIP

For students in the EYFS, or other students who cannot read, use images or concrete objects for students to place into the Consensus Circle rather than words.
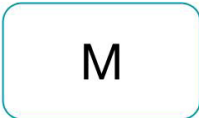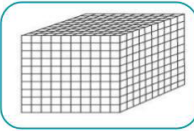
Which one does not belong?

What is it?

Playing *Which one does not belong?* is a great way of getting students to propose ideas, give reasons and provide evidence for their theories. To generate discussion, it is ideal if any of the items shared could be the odd one out.. Encourage students to listen to each other's justifications and decide whether or not to change their minds.

Which one does not belong?

A) M

B) $900 + 99 + 1$

C) x 20

D)

Embedding oracy skills

— Ensure students use the language of reasoning, justification and hypothesising to explain their theory of which one does not belong.

— Include ambitious subject-specific vocabulary when modelling your own hypothesis on what does not belong to prompt students to use this during their own contributions.

— Ask students to share their hypotheses and apply their own knowledge and reasoning as they provide evidence for their theories on what does not belong before coming to a consensus.

— Generate discussion by choosing options that could all be the one that does not belong.

— Assign a chair to each group to facilitate the discussion and make sure everyone has an equal turn, using Talk Tokens to ensure that everyone gets to have their say.

— Encourage students to speak at an appropriate volume for a small group discussion.

TOP TIP

Provide a set of target vocabulary that you would like students to use during their discussion.

If I ruled the world...

What is it?

If I ruled the world… is a great way to encourage students to use their imagination whilst using logic and reason, providing explanations for why they disagree and proposing new ideas. Each student will get a chance to express what they would do if they ruled the world. The next person must disagree and explain why, even if they actually agree! They must then say what they would do if they ruled the world and the next person must disagree with them and so on.

If I ruled the world

If I ruled the world, I would…. because…

I couldn't disagree more because…

Embedding oracy skills

- Ensure students use the language of reasoning and persuasion to try to convince people that their ideas are the best.
- Include ambitious subject-specific vocabulary when modelling your own ideas to prompt students to use this during their own contributions.

- Introduce Student Talk Tactics to encourage students to challenge each other's ideas as well as instigating their own.
- Provide sentence stems to help structure student responses e.g. "If I ruled the world I would… because….". " I could not disagree more because…."

- Model how to disagree appropriately and respectfully.
- Scaffold turn taking by using a talk protocol such as "pass and go" to organise this activity, taking turns to go round the circle but letting someone pass if they need more thinking time.

- Encourage students to speak at an appropriate volume for whole class presentational talk.

TOP TIP

If you think that your class will struggle to generate ideas, provide some images as a jumping off point.

Always, sometimes, never

What is it?

Always, sometimes, never, an activity that was originally designed to get students thinking about maths, is a particularly effective way of generating collaborative talk by promoting reasoning. It encourages students to find examples that prove or disprove a given hypothesis and is particularly effective in maths or science although can be applied in any curriculum area. Give students a set of statements and ask them to decide if they are always true, sometimes true or never true, finding examples to justify their reasoning.

The horizontal rows in the Periodic Table are called chains

Always, sometimes, never

Fish in Antarctic waters have "antifreeze" proteins in their blood

Every animal that has a skeleton inside its body is a vertebrate

Embedding oracy skills

- Ensure students use the language of reasoning and justification to help them prove their hypothesis.
- Include ambitious subject-specific vocabulary in each example to prompt students to use this during their own contributions.

- Ask students to use reasoning skills and provide proof to justify ideas; you as the teacher should model how to do this.
- Introduce the challenge, probe and clarify Student Talk Tactics to encourage students to question each other's hypotheses.
- Use "Yes but…" to structure discussion within the groups and encourage your students to challenge each other light heartedly.

- Use Talk Tokens to make sure everyone gets a chance to share their ideas.

- Encourage students to speak at an appropriate volume for a small group discussion.

TOP TIP

Always, sometimes, never is a great way for teachers to assess understanding of a topic before it starts.