

Great Oracy Exhibition 2025

The importance of oracy in developing English as an Additional Language:

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The Bell Foundation

The Bell 
Foundation



In this session



- Why we need a focus on EAL;
- Why is oracy fundamental to developing EAL acquisition;
- The Bell Foundation's Five Principles of EAL Pedagogy;
- A case study and inclusive classroom support strategies to support oracy development;

What is oracy



*The ability to articulate
ideas, develop
understanding and
engage with others
through spoken language*

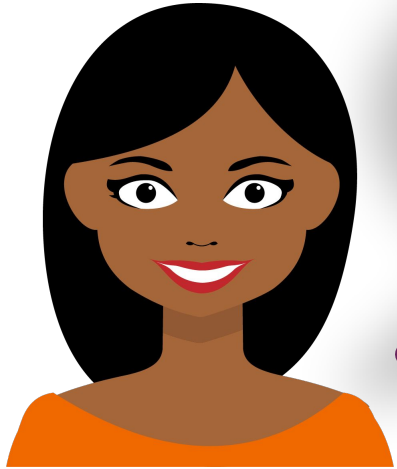
Voice 21

<https://voice21.org/what-is-oracy/>

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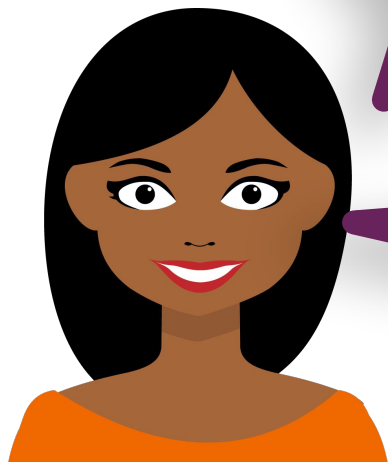
Why focus on EAL?

**True or
False?**



Just over half a million learners are classified as using English as an additional language.

Why focus on EAL?



This is false!

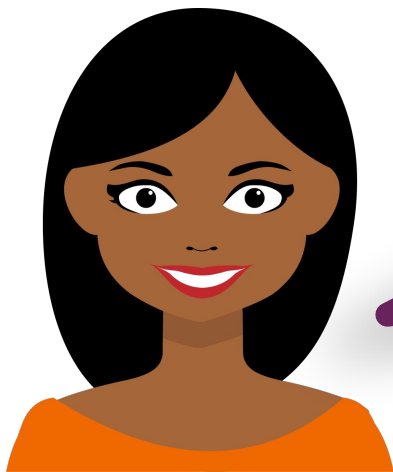
There are actually over **1.5 million** EAL learners in school in England.

Which is **1,806,029** learners who use EAL in schools in England.

Source: School Census, January 2025

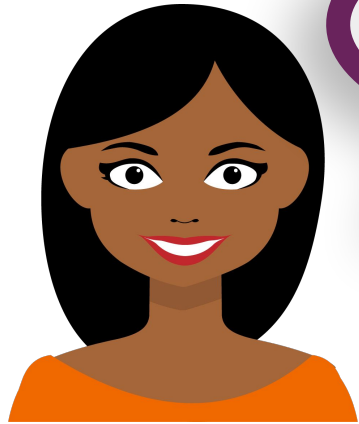
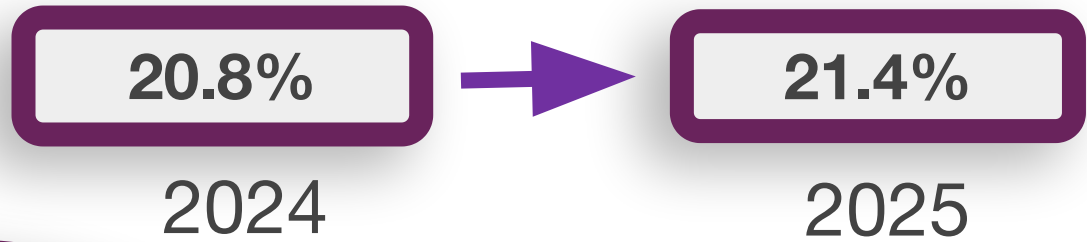
Why focus on EAL?

**True or
False?**



More than one in five of
all learners in school
use English as a
second language?

Why focus on EAL?



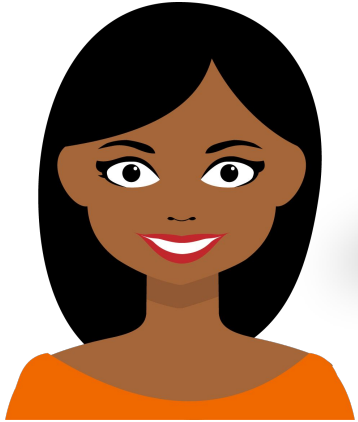
This is
true



Source: School Census, January 2025

Why focus on EAL?

True or
False?



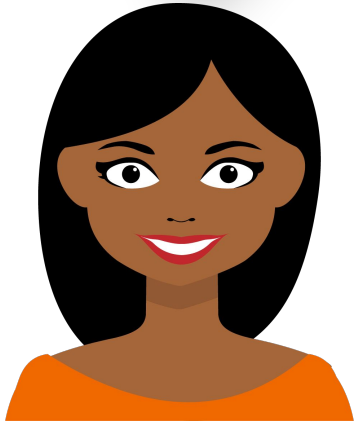
A pupil is recorded to have English as an additional language if they are **exposed to a language at home** that is known or believed to be other than English.

Why focus on EAL?

This is
true

A pupil is recorded to have English as an additional language if they are **exposed to a language at home** that is known or believed to be other than English.

This measure is not a measure of English language proficiency or a good proxy for recent immigration.



Schools, pupils and their characteristics, September 2024

Policy

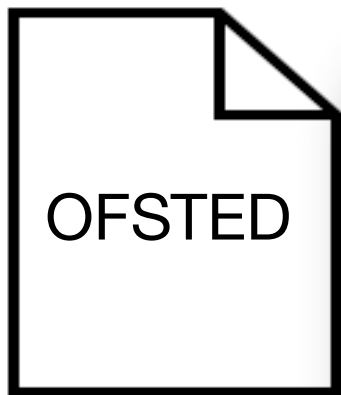
Teacher's
Standards

Teachers should **have a clear understanding** of the needs of all pupils, including [...] those with **English as an additional language** [...]

Teachers should plan teaching opportunities to **help pupils develop their English** and should aim to provide the **support pupils need to take part in all subjects**

National
Curriculum

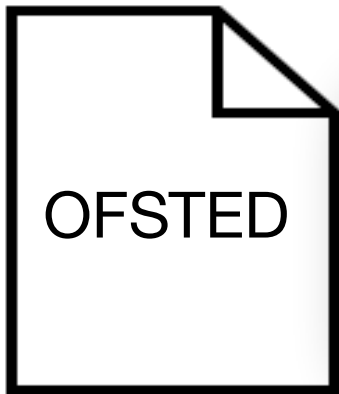
For pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, inspectors consider the extent to which:



Teachers recognise that providing opportunities for pupils to talk with staff and peers during lessons is particularly important; teachers help pupils articulate what they know and understand by scaffolding, modelling, extending and developing their ideas.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68b9a6b8b0a373a01819fe4b/Schools_inspection_toolkit.pdf
September 2025

For pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, inspectors consider the extent to which:



Teachers develop and extend pupils' language carefully and deliberately, with plenty of repetition.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68b9a6b8b0a373a01819fe4b/Schools_inspection_toolkit.pdf
September 2025

The Oracy Framework

Use the Oracy Framework to understand the physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional skills that enable successful discussion, inspiring speech and effective communication.

Physical

Linguistic

Cognitive

Social & Emotional

Oracy Cambridge

Voice 21

Student Talk Tactics

Instigate
Present an idea or open up a new line of inquiry

“ I would like to start by saying ____ ”
“ I think ____ ”
“ We haven't yet talked about ____ ”

Probe
Dig deeper, ask for evidence or justification of ideas

“ Why do you think ____ ? ”
“ What evidence do you have to support X idea ? ”
“ Could you provide an example ? ”

Challenge
Disagree or present an alternative argument

Clarify
Ask for clarification or make a point clearer

“ Could you clarify ____ ? ”
“ I'm not sure I agree with that, could you make a point clearer ? ”

Teacher Talk Tactics

Productive talk. Teachers have two additional tactics to employ in order to foster high-quality talk for learning.

Instigate
Let's start the discussion by...
• Has anyone considered...?
• I'd like to start by saying...
• I'd like to start by saying...
• I'd like to start by saying...

Probe
Dig deeper, ask for evidence or justification of ideas.
• Why do you think...?
• Could you provide an example of...?
• How do you know that?

Challenge
Disagree or present an alternative argument.
• I just don't understand...?
• You mentioned X but what about...?
• What if...?

Summarise
Summarise what you have said so far.
• So far we have talked about...
• The main points raised today were...
• To summarise X's point...

Build
Develop, add to or elaborate on an idea.
• Building on X's idea...
• I'd like to add to that...
• To develop X's idea...

Model
Present an idea or open up a new line of inquiry.
• I've not seen it before, but as we're going to challenge X's idea...
• I am going to clarify X's point to show that I understand correctly...
• I would like to go back to X's point to show the points so far for this point...

Five principles to guide EAL pedagogy

1

Multilingualism as an asset

Encouraging learners to use and develop their full linguistic repertoire is highly beneficial.

Learners' multilingualism – their ability to listen, speak, read and view, and/or write in one or more languages and/or scripts beyond English – is a valuable resource. Maintaining and further developing learners' home languages and other languages they know results in greater cognitive flexibility and stronger academic performance. Teachers and support staff should, where possible, deploy pedagogies which include the use of different languages. Learners using EAL should be encouraged to codeswitch and translate between any languages they know to support their subject content learning and the acquisition of academic English.

2

High expectations with appropriate support

Having high expectations of learners using EAL while offering them the language support that they need is beneficial to their learning.

Learners using EAL, like all learners, benefit from high expectations which inspire, motivate, and challenge them. Teachers and support staff should set goals that stretch and challenge learners of all backgrounds, abilities, and levels of proficiency in English, provide them with appropriately demanding activities, and expect their active engagement and concentration. Unlike first language English learners, those using EAL have a double task ahead of them – simultaneously learning the English language and learning content through English. This means that teaching and support staff should set high expectations while offering the right level of language support and scaffolding for learners to access the curriculum and demonstrate their knowledge/skill.

3

Integrated focus on content and language

Focusing on language while teaching subject content is crucial to the progress and attainment of learners using EAL.

Cognitive and academic abilities of learners for whom English is an additional language are separate from their English language abilities. Although multilingual learners may be fully capable of the cognitive and academic demands of curricula in their home language(s), they may be unable to access fully a similar curriculum in English due to the English language barrier; unfortunately, the curriculum does not wait.

The curriculum should be designed in such a way that all learners' needs can be met in the classroom, and any additional support required should be provided in the classroom.

English language development should be integrated and embedded into the curriculum within language-rich mainstream classes. Any withdrawal of learners using EAL from a mainstream class should be for a specific purpose, time-limited and linked to the work of the mainstream class.

4

Effective and holistic pupil assessment

EAL assessment builds a broad picture of the learner, which enables teachers to plan appropriate and targeted support.

Effective assessment provides teachers with the information needed to adapt teaching for learners using EAL. Initial diagnostic assessment should gather linguistic and educational information, such as information about learners' language and literacy practices, prior education, and current cognitive skills. Initial assessment of learners' proficiency in English should include assessment of listening, speaking, reading and viewing, and writing.

Conducting a first language assessment provides useful information. Formal standardised tests designed to assess the reading age, verbal reasoning, spelling, and reading comprehension of first-language English learners are not always suitable for assessing learners using EAL.

When assessment is used to evaluate conceptual understanding, it helps to reduce the linguistic demands of the instructions. Continuous formative assessment should include both assessment of English language development using an EAL-relevant assessment framework, and teacher assessment of learning in different subjects.

5

Social inclusion

Including learners using EAL and their family in all aspects of school life improves their wellbeing and motivation for learning and is beneficial for the school.

In order to have opportunities for success in school, learners using EAL need to feel safe and secure from day one and need not be excluded from any aspect of school life. Schools should foster an inclusive culture in which learners using EAL are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities and to join mixed-language friendship groups.

Social inclusion is successful where schools create respectful relationships with learners' families and the wider communities, striving to understand families' backgrounds, cultures, and prior experiences. Some parents of children who use EAL, especially those who are new to English and to the English school system themselves, face additional challenges to parental participation. Therefore, schools should have accessible communications and expectations for all staff, schoolwide, to build reciprocal relationships which actively promote family involvement and mutual understanding.

Icons from 1-5

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How does talking help?



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Oracy is valuable for everyone, but since it supports language acquisition too it is especially important for EAL learners

Sharples, R. *Teaching EAL* (p80)

Proficiency in spoken language is essential if children are to reach their potential at school.

Gibbons, P. *Learning to learn in a second language*, p26

How does talking help?

Discuss:

In what way does 'talking' help multilingual learners?



How does talking

help?

Talking.....:

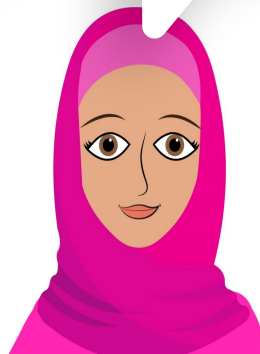
helps me to
hear new
language



helps me to
experiment
with new
language



helps me to
hear use
new
language



helps me to
write in a
new
language



1. Multilingualism is an

RedKoala/Shutterstock.com

asset:



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Five principles to guide EAL pedagogy

1. Multilingualism is an asset:



Five principles to guide EAL pedagogy

Multilingualism is an asset

Proficiency in

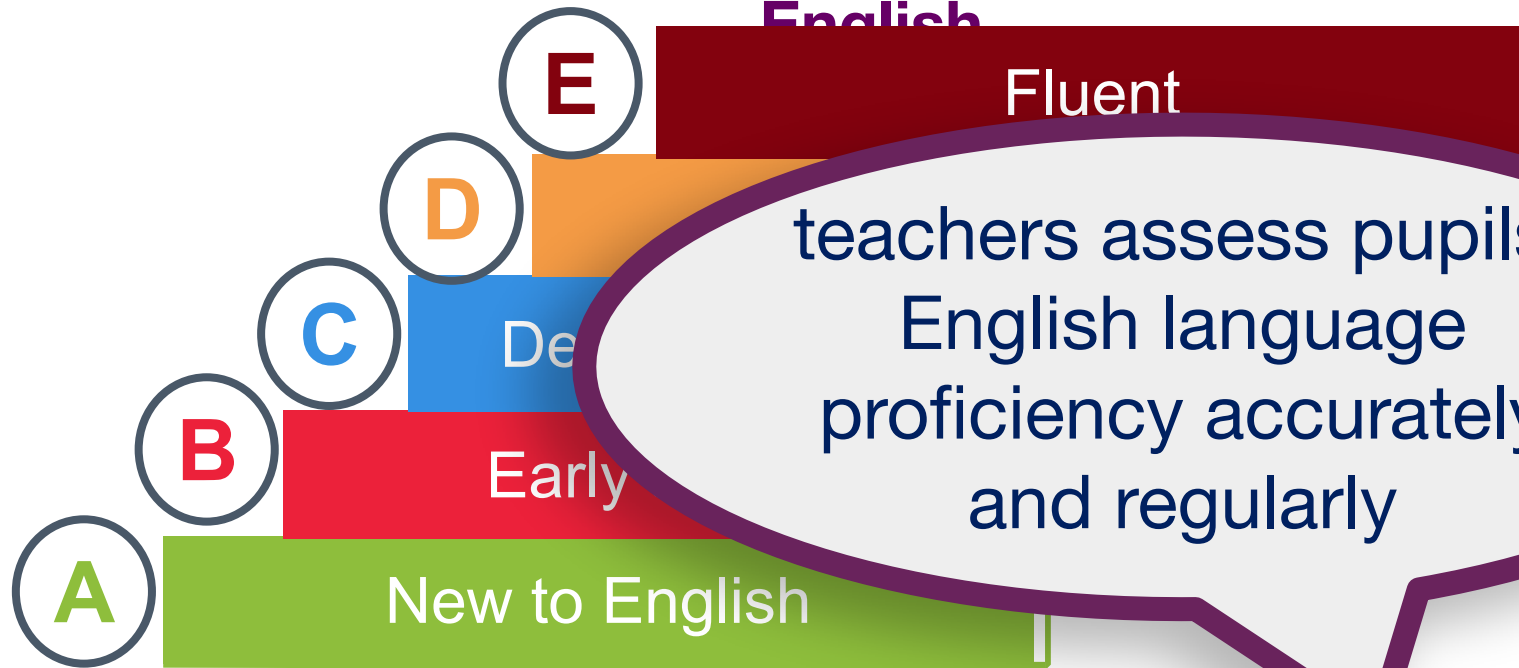
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Hello

Witam

ਸਤ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ



Five principles to guide EAL pedagogy

2. High expectations with appropriate support



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Five principles to guide EAL pedagogy

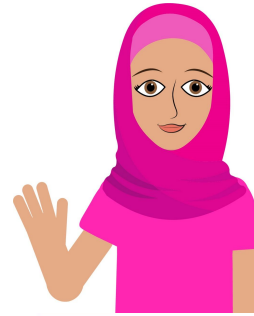


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2 : High expectations with appropriate

support

May know content in their home language.



I learned about this in Iraq.

Need different levels and types of language support.



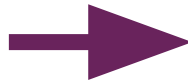
Five principles to guide EAL

2. High expectations with appropriate support

additional language practice

more language models

additional pre-teaching of
key language



[Yurchanka](#)
[Siarhei/Shutterstock.com](#)



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Five principles to guide EAL pedagogy



2 : High expectations with appropriate support

Have a double job to do:
learn English
and
learn subject content through English



Case Study - Noor

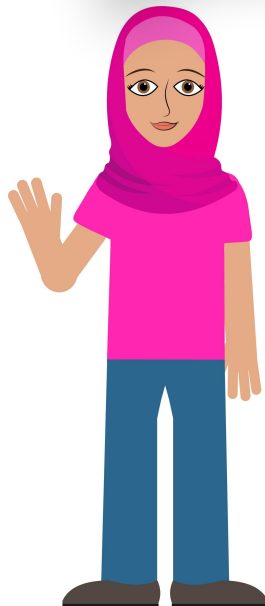
Year 6

From Iraq

Been in the UK for
1 month

Marhaba

مرحبا



Speaks Arabic

Been to school in
Iraq

Band A

Age-appropriate first
language literacy



Discussion:

What strategies could you use to prepare this learner for exploratory talk or a discussion task?



Adaptive Strategies

First language pairs



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اليوم تأكل الفئران



الفئران تأكل
البذور

Careful groupings

How do you say river in Arabic?



RedKoala/Shutterstock.com

Nahr
نهر



Adaptive Strategies

Bilingual Glossary

English	Visual	The translation in my language	The translation in another language I speak	What does the word mean?
continent				
country				
region				
border				
				

Hello

Witam

ਸਤ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ

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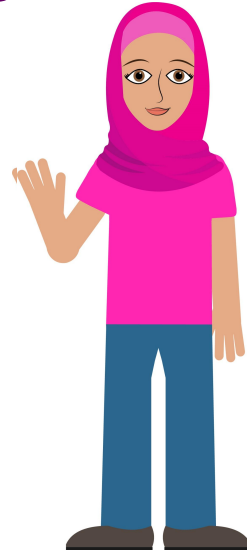


Adaptive Strategies



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I know this but,
I don't know the
words in English.



Now I have
translated the
words I know
what words
to use.

Adaptive Strategies

Modelling

Repetition

Recasting

Options in choosing
vocabulary



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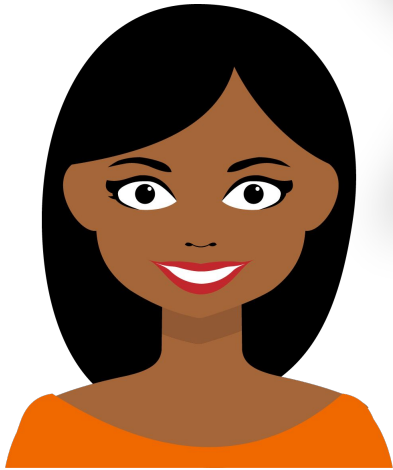
Adaptive Strategies

Repetition



CosmoVector/Shutterstock.com

This is Henry the Eighth.



Henry the Eighth



Adaptive Strategies

Recasting



CosmoVector/Shutterstock.com

Henry Eight, he
got six wife.

Yes, that's
right, Henry
the Eighth had
six **wives**.

Well done,
Noor

Can you
say that
again?

Henry **the**
Eighth had
six **wives**.



Adaptive Strategies

Choices in Vocabulary

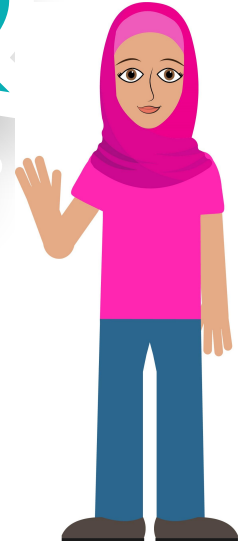


Is this Henry the Ninth or Henry Eighth?

Yes. Did Henry the Eighth have five wives or six wives ?

Henry Eighth.

Six.



Adaptive Strategies

Grading language



First talk to
your buddy

Next choose
three words.

Pour the
water

Line up at the
door.

How many do
you need to
count?

How often do you
need to water the
seeds you planted?



Adaptive Strategies



CosmoVector/Shutterstock.com

Pre teaching
vocabulary

Snap

Bingo

Matching pairs

Definition pairs

Connect 4 games



Adaptive Strategies

Collaborative activities



- Snowballing;
- Barrier games;
- Rainbowing;
- Competitive games;
- Working on shared tasks;
- Think-pair-share;
- Listening triangles.

Adaptive Strategies

Collaborative activities



- Effective groupings of learners;
- Establish the rules and expected behaviour;
- The activity instructions are comprehensible;
- Encourage learners to use their home language during discussions;
- Everyone is involved;
- Ensure that the task is challenging and meaningful.

Adaptive Strategies

Collaborative activities

Talking together in a group helps us all to learn language and to learn through language.



Adaptive Strategies

Matching pairs



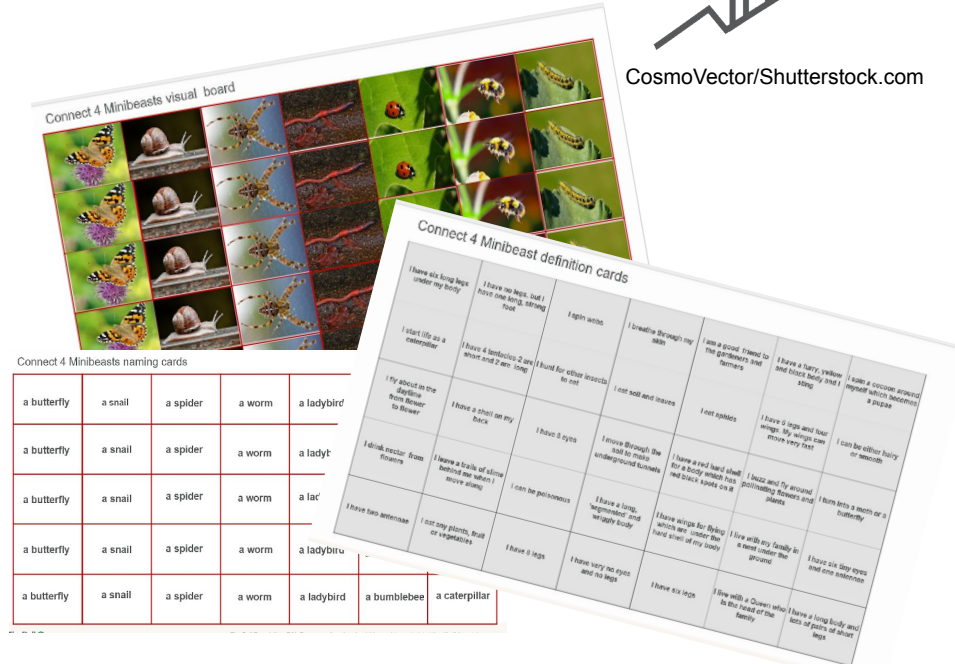
The Amazon river

This is the longest river in South America.

Connect 4 games



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Definition pairs



Adaptive Strategies



Discussion:

Thinking about the strategies that have been discussed consider what further strategies you could suggest to prepare a learner to participate in delivering a class presentation.



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Adaptive Strategies



Build vocabulary

Graphic
organisers

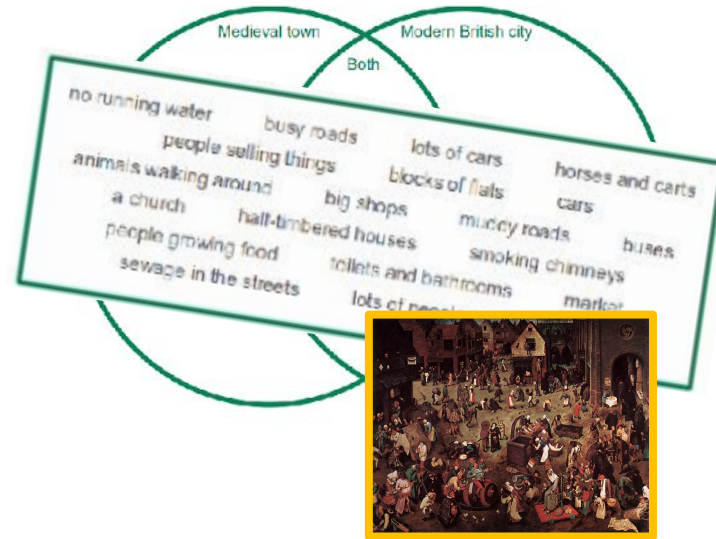
city in modern Britain



Mud
وحل



A half-timbered
house





Speaking frames

A medieval town was clean/smelly_____.

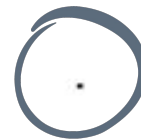
A modern town has lots of sh _____ s.

A modern town has lots of c _____ on the streets, but a medieval town had lots of a _____ walking around.



Substitution tables

Medieval towns		have	lots of cars in the streets	
Modern towns		had	lots of animals in the streets	
			lots of big shops	
			smoking chimneys	



Some key points and takeaways from the

Session 2

Recasting
language

First
Language
buddies

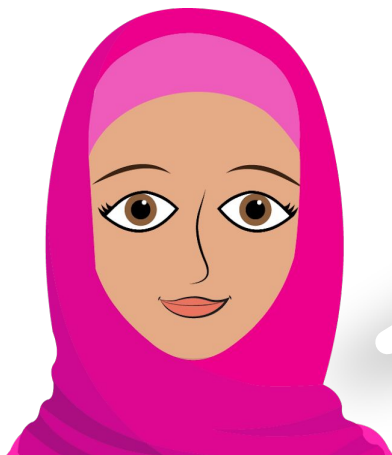
Modelling
language

Choices in
vocabulary

Share:

One or two things that you have found useful and will take away from this session today.

A final word



**Oracy helps me be
brave**

Year 5 student, Bedgrove school Junior School
Voice 21 website



THE GREAT ORACY EXHIBITION

The Bell Foundation



bell-foundation.org.uk

