
Harby Church of England Primary School

Oracy Policy



Our vision

Children use their voice to speak clearly, confidently and respectfully. We strive to build a community where every voice is valued, heard and listened to.

Intent

Oracy plays a central role in teaching and learning at Harby C of E Primary School. Children are explicitly taught both how to speak and how to listen. Through talk, they are supported to discuss, perform, debate and express themselves across a range of contexts and for varied purposes. We aim to develop pupils' confidence and skills in speaking and listening by encouraging them to value different viewpoints and engage in meaningful, purposeful conversations.

As part of our inclusive school community, we promote all forms of communication and provide regular opportunities for children to interact and learn through talk. Oracy is embedded across the curriculum, enabling pupils to deepen understanding, unlock new learning and challenge their thinking.

We recognise that oracy is a vital and valuable classroom activity, particularly in supporting collaborative learning. This begins in the Early Years, as children start their school journey and develop the foundations of communication.

We are committed to developing spoken language not only through the taught curriculum, but also through playtimes, lunchtimes and extra-curricular activities, ensuring that opportunities for talk are continuous throughout the school day.

Aims

Our oracy provision aims to:

- Develop pupils who speak clearly, confidently and appropriately for different audiences and purposes.
 - Teach children to listen attentively, respond thoughtfully and value others' views.
 - Use talk to support thinking, learning and reasoning across the curriculum.
 - Promote respectful discussion, including the ability to agree and disagree constructively.
 - Ensure all pupils, including those with SEND or EAL, can participate and succeed in talk.
 - Embed oracy across all subjects and throughout school life.
 - Build lifelong communication skills for learning, relationships and future success.
-

Implementation

Oracy is explicitly taught and embedded across all areas of school life at Harby Church of England Primary School. We provide regular, structured opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in a range of contexts.

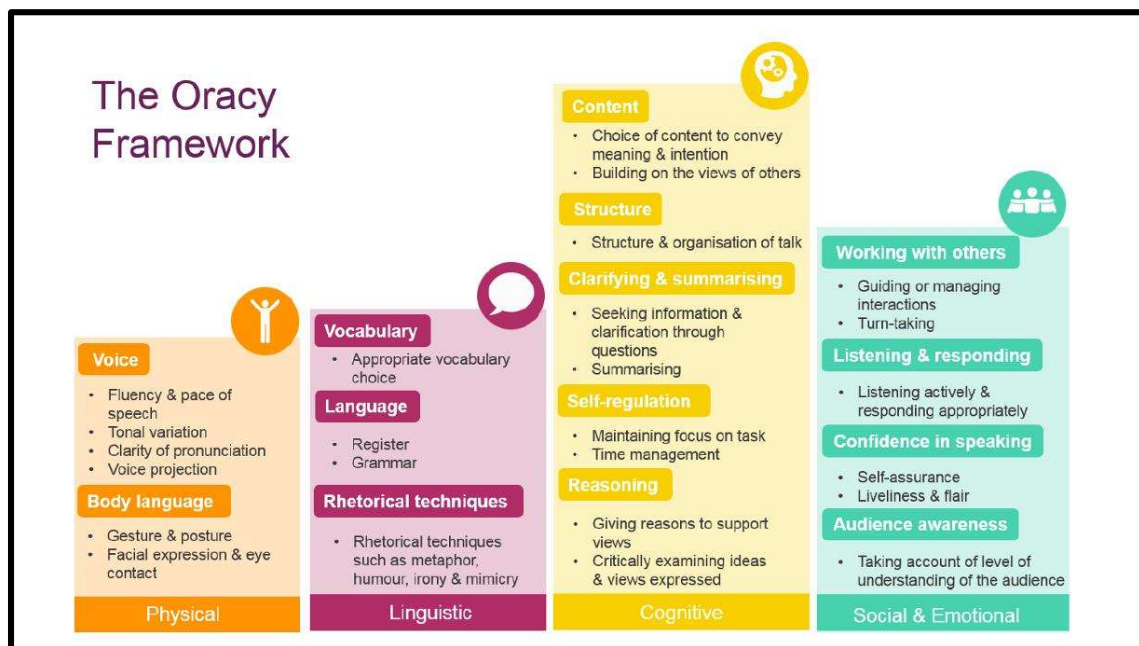
Teaching and Learning

- Oracy is taught through planned, progressive lessons, where pupils learn specific skills such as listening, discussion techniques and vocabulary development.
- Through weekly oracy assemblies. During these sessions, they develop a range of listening skills, vocabulary and discussion techniques, while experiencing different forms of talk, from exploratory discussions to presentational speaking.
- Teachers model high-quality talk and explicitly teach pupils how to speak and how to listen.
- Opportunities for talk are carefully planned into lessons across the curriculum, including discussion, questioning, explanation and debate.

Oracy Framework

At Harby Church of England Primary School, we use the Oracy Framework developed by the University of Cambridge and Voice 21. This framework identifies four key strands of effective communication:

- Physical
- Cognitive
- Linguistic
- Social and Emotional



The framework supports both staff and pupils in understanding what makes effective spoken communication. These strands underpin purposeful discussion, confident presentation and meaningful interaction. Staff use the framework to inform feedback and assess progress, while pupils use it to reflect on, evaluate and further develop their speaking and listening skills.

Discussion Guidelines

At Harby C of E Primary, we have developed our own set of Discussion Guidelines. These guidelines support partner and group discussions, helping to create a safe, effective and respectful environment for talk. Different features are focused on each week to build skills and support a wide range of talk.



Groupings

Groupings support talk for different purposes. Groupings are chosen to suit the purpose of a discussion and the number of pupils involved.

Sentence Stems

We use a range of sentence stems to support pupils in their talk. We also draw on a range of sentence stems, including Tower Hamlets sentence stems and Voice 21 guidance, to ensure a range of talk types are appropriately supported across year groups.

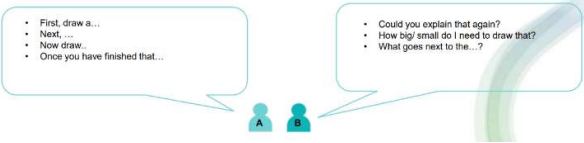
Teachers use sentence stems in classrooms, incorporate them into planning, and use them flexibly across the curriculum as needed. They are an essential tool for scaffolding discussion and supporting pupils with a range of needs to participate confidently in talk.

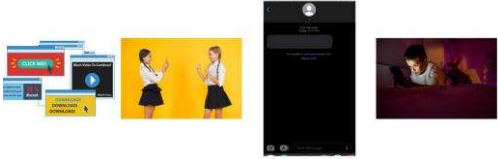
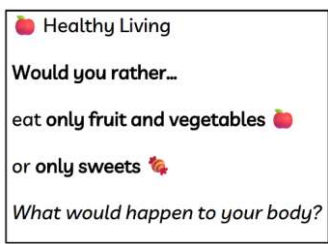


Instigator	Challenger	Prober	Clarifier	Summariser	Builder
I would like to start by saying...	To challenge you I think...	Why do you think...?	Can you explain a bit more about...?	Overall, the main points were...	I agree, and would like to add...
I think we should consider...	I understand your viewpoint but...	What do you think would be the effect of...?	Does that mean...?	The 3 main things we spoke about were...	Building on that idea, I think...
Let's also think about...	I disagree with you because...	Can you give me an example...?	What do you mean when you say...?	Our discussion focused on...	

Strategies

We use a range of strategies to teach oracy skills and to harness talk as a key tool for learning and understanding. These strategies include, but are not limited to:

Oracy detectives	 Children or staff are given a role to spot good oracy in action.
Talking points	 Present the children with a statement or a question to discuss.
Vocabulary bullseye	 Students are challenged to explain a concept or topic while incorporating the vocabulary displayed on the target. Points are awarded based on the difficulty of the words used.
Barrier game – back to back	 Children work in pairs. One pupil takes on the role of the instructor and is given an image to describe. The second pupil listens carefully and draws the image, following their partner's verbal instructions.
Odd-one-out	 Discussion activity using different strategies.

Find the link	 Discussion activity using different strategies to find the link between the words or images.
Would you rather?	 Discussion activity posing questions for children to discuss.
Intensity Lines	Children are provided with words or pictures which increase and decrease in some capacity. The children must work this out and reason their thinking and rationale. They place the words or images in a line to represent their thinking.
Snowball	 It begins with an individual thinking about a prompt, then sharing and developing their ideas in progressively larger conversational groups, until the whole class unites.
Word – definition - picture match	Children are given a selection of vocabulary and definitions or (and) pictures to match. If this is a lesson introducing vocabulary this could be a good place to use the retrieval sentence stems. This would help children share their thinking and make links with prior knowledge.

Presentational oracy

Presentational skills are taught explicitly within lessons to prepare pupils for assemblies, presentations and performances. Children are given opportunities throughout the year to speak in front of an audience. These opportunities may include presentational assemblies, performance poetry, inter-class sharing of learning, school productions and speeches.

Pupils develop these skills using the Oracy Framework and receive constructive verbal feedback from both teachers and peers. When preparing and rehearsing, they are encouraged to consider elements such as pitch, tone, pace, gesture, body language and projection, with expectations adapted to suit the year group and the purpose of the talk.

Inclusion

At Harby Church of England Primary School we are committed to ensuring that every pupil has equitable access to high-quality oracy education, regardless of background, ability, or need.

We recognise that spoken language underpins learning, thinking, and social development. Therefore, oracy teaching is designed to be inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the diverse needs of all pupils.

We will:

- Provide structured and scaffolded opportunities for talk so that all pupils can participate and succeed
- Use a range of strategies (e.g. sentence stems, talk frames, visual prompts) to support pupils who require additional guidance
- Ensure pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are supported through adapted approaches, targeted interventions, and collaboration with specialists where appropriate
- Create a language-rich classroom environment that supports pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), including explicit vocabulary teaching and opportunities for oral rehearsal
- Promote a safe, respectful and inclusive culture, where all voices are valued and pupils feel confident to express their ideas
- Be mindful of pupils who may be less confident or reluctant speakers, providing progressive opportunities to build confidence and participation
- Challenge and extend pupils with strong oracy skills through opportunities for discussion, debate, and leadership in talk

Teachers will use ongoing assessment to ensure that all pupils are appropriately supported and challenged, enabling every child to develop the oracy skills necessary for academic success and effective communication beyond school.

Impact

Progression in oracy

Oracy skills underpin all areas of learning and are applicable across the entire curriculum. In order to develop a secure understanding of subject content, it is essential that pupils are able to articulate their ideas and use talk as a tool to deepen their thinking. Opportunities for purposeful talk enable pupils to clarify understanding, rehearse ideas and engage more fully with their learning.

At Harby C of E Primary we use the Voice 21 Progression Document to support expectations for oracy in the classroom, to inform curriculum planning and to ensure students are building upon prior learning and communication. See example below –

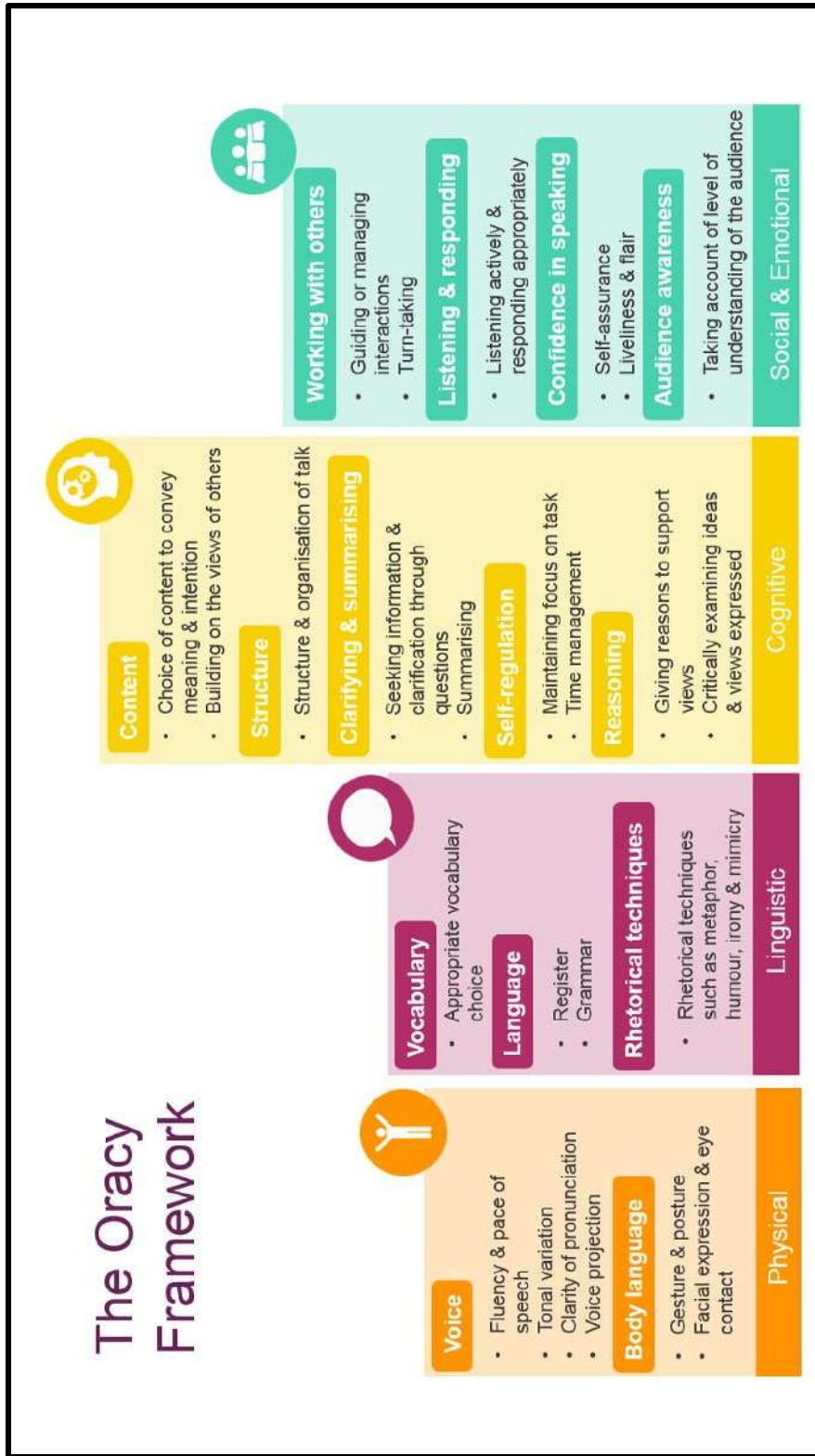
Reception (4-5 years old)				
Key skills to teach:				Experiences:
Physical	Linguistic	Cognitive	Social and emotional	• To speak to a partner during whole class teaching • Taking pupils to the supermarket or post office to practice speaking to an unfamiliar adult to carry out a transaction. • Provide pupils with opportunities to speak for an extended period of time about something they are interested in, for example a favourite toy or what they did at the weekend.
• To speak audibly so they can be heard and understood • To use gestures to support meaning in play	• To use talk in play to practice new vocabulary • To join phrases with words such as 'if', 'because' 'so' 'could' 'but'	• To use 'because' to develop their ideas • To make relevant contributions and asks questions • To describe events that have happened to them in detail	• To look at someone who is speaking to them • To take turns to speak when working in a group	
Teaching ideas:				
• Provide pupils with opportunities to take on different roles, ensuring they are equipped with the appropriate knowledge and vocabulary to do this successfully. E.g. A shopkeeper speaking to a customer might say 'How can I help you today?' 'Yes, let me get that for you. One moment'. Ensure that pupils are given specific praise when they adopt a role and use language appropriately. E.g. 'Wow you sounded just like a grown up shopkeeper!' • Support pupils' understanding of turn-taking in talk by using a physical object such as a toy to signify whose turn it is to speak. • Support pupils' understanding of listening through partner conversations. Break down what it means to listen and frequently return to this through praise. E.g. 'Perfect partners sit calmly and face each other when they are listening'. • Introduce new language and sentence stems through call and repeat, 'my turn, your turn'. • Support pupils to develop an awareness of the volume of their voice through modelling and chances for them to practice speaking at different levels. E.g. 'tell your partner what you had for breakfast in a whisper ... now tell me your favourite colour in a playground voice!' • Build pupils' confidence to speak in class by getting them talking about silly subjects, e.g. would you rather be a chicken or a cow?				

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Oracy Framework Voice 21

Appendix 2 - Oracy Guidelines at Harby C of E Primary School

Appendix 3 - Oracy Progression document Voice 21



Appendix 2 - Oracy Guidelines at Harby C of E Primary School





Oracy Progression Map: Primary

Reception (4-5 years old)

Key skills to teach:				Experiences:
Physical ● To speak audibly so they can be heard and understood ● To use gestures to support meaning in play	Linguistic ● To use talk in play to practice new vocabulary ● To join phrases with words such as 'if', 'because' 'so' 'could' 'but'	Cognitive ● To use 'because' to develop their ideas ● To make relevant contributions and asks questions ● To describe events that have happened to them in detail	Social and emotional ● To look at someone who is speaking to them ● To take turns to speak when working in a group	● To speak to a partner during whole class teaching ● Taking pupils to the supermarket or post office to practice speaking to an unfamiliar adult to carry out a transaction. ● Provide pupils with opportunities to speak for an extended period of time about something they are interested in, for example a favourite toy or what they did at the weekend.
Teaching ideas: ● Provide pupils with opportunities to take on different roles, ensuring they are equipped with the appropriate knowledge and vocabulary to do this successfully. E.g. A shopkeeper speaking to a customer might say 'How can I help you today?' 'Yes, let me get that for you. One moment'. Ensure that pupils are given specific praise when they adopt a role and use language appropriately. E.g. 'Wow you sounded just like a grown up shopkeeper!' ● Support pupils' understanding of turn-taking in talk by using a physical object such as a toy to signify whose turn it is to speak. ● Support pupils' understanding of listening through partner conversations. Break down what it means to listen and frequently return to this through praise. E.g. 'Perfect partners sit calmly and face each other when they are listening'. ● Introduce new language and sentence stems through call and repeat, 'my turn, your turn'. ● Support pupils to develop an awareness of the volume of their voice through modelling and chances for them to practice speaking at different levels. E.g. 'tell your partner what you had for breakfast in a whisper ... now tell me your favourite colour in a playground voice!' ● Build pupils' confidence to speak in class by getting them talking about silly subjects, e.g. would you rather be a chicken or a cow?				



Year 1 (5-6 years old)

Key skills to teach:				Experiences
Physical - To use the appropriate tone of voice in the right context. E.g. speaking calmly when resolving an issue in the playground. - To speak clearly and confidently in a range of contexts	Linguistic - To use vocabulary appropriate specific to the topic at hand - To take opportunities to try out new language, even if not always used correctly. - To use sentence stems to link to other's ideas in group discussion. E.g. 'I agree with... because ...' 'Linking to ...' - To use conjunctions to organise and sequence ideas e.g. firstly, secondly, finally.	Cognitive - To offer reasons for their opinions - To recognise when they haven't understood something and asks a question to help with this. - To disagree with someone else's opinion politely. - To explain ideas and events in chronological order.	Social and emotional - Listens to others and is willing to change their mind based on what they have heard - To organise group discussions independently of an adult.	- To take part in small group discussions without an adult. - To be filmed speaking and use this for reflection - To speak in front of a larger audience e.g. during an assembly.
Teaching ideas: - Introduce pupils to different protocols to scaffold turn-taking e.g. putting a thumb in when they want to speak, or taking turns passing talk around a circle. - Use visual aids to support pupils' awareness of talk e.g. using counters to represent contributions to a discussion or passing wool from speaker to speaker to show how contributions in a conversation should link to each other. - Introduce pupils to the roles of the 'builder' and 'challenger'. Equip pupils with sentence stems to fulfil each role. - As a teacher, explicitly model your own use of questions to clarify your understanding, e.g. 'I didn't understand that so I'm going to ask a question to help me. What did you mean by X?' - Draw pupils' attention to the role that listening has in developing understanding. E.g. 'Now that we have heard that, has anyone changed their mind?'				



Year 2 (6-7 years old)

Key skills to teach:				Experiences
Physical To start to use gesture to support the delivery of ideas e.g. gesturing towards someone if referencing their idea, or counting off ideas on their fingers as they say them.	Linguistic - To adapt how they speak in different situations according to audience. - To use sentence stems to signal when they are building on or challenging others' ideas.	Cognitive - To ask questions to find out more about a subject. - To build on others' ideas in discussions. - To make connections between what has been said and their own and others' experiences.	Social and emotional - To start to develop an awareness of audience e.g. what might interest a certain group. - To be aware of others who have not spoken and to invite them into discussion. - Confident delivery of short pre-prepared material.	- Speak to unfamiliar people with real purpose e.g. asking questions to a museum curator or having a conversation with a visitor in the classroom. - Participate in a short 'show and tell' session.
Teaching ideas:				
- Introduce sentence stems with accompanying gestures to support meaning for both speaker and their audience. E.g. linking fingers together for 'linking to' and holding up one finger to emphasise their first point. - Create different role play scenarios which enable pupils to practice speaking in different contexts e.g. having tea with the Queen, talking to sibling, talking to a neighbour or a friend on the playground. - Play games which encourage pupils to elaborate on their ideas, e.g. 'tell me more' or 'just a minute'. - Use hot-seating and question tennis to develop pupils' questioning skills. - Praise pupils who invite others into discussions and as a class develop ideas for how this can be done, e.g. saying their name, asking them a question, turning to them. - Before students deliver presentational talk create structured opportunities for pupils to reflect on what will engage their audience e.g. how can they make their object for 'show and tell' interesting for their peers.				



Year 3 (7-8 years old)

Year 6 (10-11 years old)					
Key skills to teach:				Experiences	
Physical - Deliberately varies tone of voice in order to convey meaning. E.g. speaking authoritatively during an expert talk or speaking with pathos when telling a sad part of a story. - Considers position and posture when addressing an audience.	Linguistic - To be able to use specialist language to describe their own and others' talk. - To use specialist vocabulary. - To make precise language choices e.g. instead of describing a cake as 'nice' using 'delectable'.	Cognitive - To offer opinions that aren't their own. - To reflect on discussions and identify how to improve. - To be able to summarise a discussion. - To reach shared agreement in discussions.	Social and emotional - To adapt the content of their speech for a specific audience. - To speak with confidence in front of an audience.	- Take on an expert role e.g. to deliver a talk or speech as an astrologist or archaeologist. - Become a storyteller for an authentic audience. - Present to an audience of older or younger students. - Chair a discussion. - Hold a class meeting.	
Teaching ideas:					
- Expose students to a range of models for talk, e.g. by meeting an expert or watching a talk online. Unpick why each speaker is successful e.g. how they establish their authority. - Develop a shared language to describe talk in the classroom through creating a class set of 'discussion guidelines'. These can be used as success criteria to support pupils to reflect on their discussions. - Introduce 'Talk Detectives' to support pupils to reflect on their talk and raise pupils' awareness of what makes good discussion. - Spend time teaching pupils what it means to be a chair, e.g. a chair should be prepared to ask probing and clarifying questions and encourage others to do so too. - Scaffold pupils' summaries by allocating one student in a trio discussion the role of the 'silent summariser'. While the other members of the trio discuss an idea, the silent summariser must remain quiet, listen and then feedback the main points at the end of the discussion. - Play 'articulate' with specialist subject vocabulary.					



Year 4 (8-9 years old)

Moving away from just sharing information and to more specific purposes. A more sophisticated understanding of different contexts which goes beyond 'formal V informal'. Responding to academic questioning using knowledge.

Key skills to teach:				Experiences
Physical - To consider movement when addressing an audience. - To use pauses for effect in presentational talk e.g. when telling a anecdote or telling a joke.	Linguistic To carefully consider the words and phrasing they use to express their ideas and how this supports the purpose of talk.	Cognitive - To be able to give supporting evidence e.g. citing a text, a previous example or a historical event. - To ask probing questions. - To reflect on their own oracy skills and identify areas of strength and areas to improve.	Social and emotional - To use more natural and subtle prompts for turn taking. - To be able to empathise with an audience. - To consider the impact of their words on others when giving feedback.	- To use talk for a specific purpose e.g. to persuade or to entertain. - To speak in front of a larger audience of adults e.g. a group of eight. - To collaboratively solve a problem. - To speak with an unknown adult for a specific purpose, e.g. for market research or making an order. - To receive feedback from a peer or audience member on their oracy skills. - Create TV or Radio adverts. - Mock election hustings - Peer teaching - Perform poetry by heart
Teaching ideas: - Introduce pupils to sentence stems to cite evidence and ask probing questions. - Teach the conventions for different types of talk, e.g. in oral storytelling using similes, metaphors, time connectives, rich description and techniques to build suspense. In a persuasive pitch using a 'hook' to grab the audience's attention, rhetorical devices such list of three and rhetorical questions. - Create opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own oracy skills and those of their peers, and set targets for improvement. - Set up discussions where each pupil has key information to bring to the discussion. E.g. each pupil has read a different historical source or piece of evidence and the group needs to decide the cause of the central event. - When using trio discussions, allocate one member of the trio the role of questioner. Their sole responsibility during the trio discussion is to ask questions of the rest of the group.				

Year 5 (9-10 years old)

Talk at this age is much more reliant on knowledge, not just expert knowledge but knowledge of the world. Increasingly able to participate in high level spontaneous talk - not just subject matter of their own choosing and responding to academic questioning.

Key skills to teach:				Experiences
Physical - To project their voice to large audience. - For gestures to become increasingly natural.	Linguistic To use an increasingly sophisticated range of sentence stems with fluency and accuracy.	Cognitive - To be able to draw upon knowledge of the world to support their own point of view and explore different perspectives. E.g. In a discussion about vegetarianism, rather than saying 'my mum is a vegetarian so eating meat is wrong' to be able to say 'lots of people don't eat meat because they believe killing animals is cruel'. - To identify when a discussion is going off topic and to be able to bring it back on track.	Social and emotional - Listening for extended periods of time. - To speak with flair and passion.	- Enter a debate competition - BBC school report - Create a Youtube Channel - Meet professionals e.g. a lawyer, an MP or councillor to ask questions about their job. - Leading a parents' evening. - Compering a school talent show or event. - Slam poetry - Stand up comedy

Teaching ideas:	
- Equip students with the language to describe when a discussion has gone off track and support them to identify when this has happened e.g. by looking at transcripts or video examples. Develop sentence stems for students to bring discussions back on track e.g. 'That might be true, however what do you think about X?' 'It feels a bit like we are going off topic here. Let's get back to X'. - Teach strategies to be able to listen for an extended period of time, e.g. note-taking or drawing visuals. - Use vocal warm ups and diaphragm breathing exercises to support voice projection. Some examples are in the book, This is a Voice. - Develop a bank of sentence stems which have a similar meaning to those students are already familiar with e.g. for agreement: 'I agree and I would like to add ...' 'I would like to echo what X said because ...' 'I see it in a similar way to X because ...' 'I have a similar opinion because ...'	

Year 6 (10 -11 years old)

To develop their own style as a speaker; to have a sense of their place in discussions, and an increasingly subtle understanding of how to navigate different situations.

Key skills to teach:				Experiences
Physical ● To speak fluently in front of an audience. ● To have a stage presence. ● Consciously adapt tone, pace and volume of voice within a single situation.	Linguistic ● To vary sentence structures and length for effect when speaking. ● To be comfortable using idiom and expressions.	Cognitive ● To construct a detailed argument or complex narrative. ● To spontaneously respond to increasingly complex questions, citing evidence where appropriate.	Social and emotional ● To use humour effectively. ● To be able to read a room or a group and take action accordingly e.g. if everyone looks disengaged, moving on or changing topic, or if people look confused stopping to take questions.	● Give a speech to an audience of peers and adults. ● Lead School Council ● Mentor or teach younger students ● Lead an assembly. ● Act as a tour guides for prospective parents. ● Record their own sports commentary.
Teaching ideas:				
● Play games like 'just a minute' to practise fluency when talking about a given topic e.g. climate change. ● Practise 'power poses' to explore physical aspects of speaking ● Teach structures for building evidence-based arguments				