

Read Alouds • Shared Reading • Small Group Reading Instruction • Writing • Phonological Awareness • Word Work • **Speaking and Listening** • Viewing, Visualizing and Representing • Digital Literacy • Cross-Curricular Literacy • Independent Reading

COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY GUIDES *GRADES K-6*



SPEAKING AND LISTENING

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OVERVIEW

Speaking and listening is critical for building relationships, for literacy and learning. Language must be heard before it can be read. We use language for expressing our thoughts, first orally, then encoding it in print. (*Sue McCandlish, Speech Pathologist*)

Speaking and listening instruction includes the following components:

- Developing listening and responding skills
- Promoting auditory memory and teaching students to hear their “inner voice”
- Playing with language - building vocabulary - using linking and signal words
- Teaching a variety of spoken texts and using talk as a “performance” (e.g., plays, speeches, oral reports, debates, storytelling, sharing circles, procedures, role plays/interviews, conversations, reading aloud and reader’s theatre)
- Using talk as a way to discuss, think aloud and extend conceptual knowledge
- Recounting and retelling, presenting information, and developing speaking skills (formal and informal) with thought given to how to engage the audience and support listening
- Creating a supportive social environment that involves learning to talk and listen as well as learning *about* talking and listening

RELEVANCE TO PROGRAM OF STUDIES

Oral language is the foundation of literacy. Through listening and speaking, people communicate thoughts, feelings, experiences, information and opinions, and learn to understand themselves and others. Oral language carries a community’s stories, values, beliefs and traditions. Listening and speaking enable students to explore ideas and concepts, as well as to understand and organize their experiences and knowledge. They use oral language to learn, solve problems and reach goals. To become discerning, lifelong learners, students at all grades need to develop fluency and confidence in their oral language abilities. They benefit from many opportunities to listen and

speaking both informally and formally for a variety of purposes. (Alberta Education, ELA K-9 Program of Studies, 2000).

Oral production is required in all five of the General Outcomes of ELA K-9 and is also a component of the following Competencies (Alberta Education, 2016): Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Managing Information, Creativity and Innovation, Communication and Collaboration.

CONSIDERATIONS - PLANNING TIPS - CLASSROOM DESIGN

- Consider the arrangement of desks in the classroom. Do they allow for partner or group conversations? Is there room for students to get up, walk around and pair up with new partners?
- Facilitate frequent conversations (adult to child and child to child) for varying purposes: questioning, explaining, persuading, describing, comparing, collaborating, formulating ideas, negotiating/ reaching a consensus, conversing and entertaining.
- Teach students how to participate in an interactive conversation and develop their interpersonal skills. For example, what positive cues look like (body position, eye contact, body language), how take turns, change the subject, ask for clarification, ask questions, agree/disagree respectfully with speaker, honour all points of view, address errors, add to the points, paraphrase, summarize, wrap up the conversation and thank each other. Consider using a strategy such as Talking Chips to manage turn taking (Described at bottom of article, Strategy #6: http://www.kaganonline.com/free_articles/dr_spencer_kagan/281/Kagan-Structures-A-Miracle-of-Active-Engagement,3)



- Many students equate listening with not talking, but it requires far more active involvement. This skill should be explicitly taught and students should be given daily attentive listening opportunities (e.g. read alouds) as well as time to reflect, monitor others and self-assess their progress. Provide strategies for ways of listening, recall, constructing meaning, and identifying speaker’s perspective.
- Prior to listening tasks, students need relevant

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background information, a purpose for listening and an understanding of what they will be asked to do after. For example, a listening task might focus on listening for the gist, searching for specific information, following oral directions, sensing mood and perspective, considering text type/structure, eliciting questions, being invited to challenge what is heard, or simply be designed for enjoyment.

- As teachers, we need to model good listening by stopping and really hearing our students, getting down to their eye level and paraphrasing what they say (correcting any grammatical errors in our recasts). We can also help students to have more “silent conversations” with themselves (metacognition).
- Build auditory memory skills, e.g., memorize songs, retell stories and create learning activities where children repeat what others have said and then respond with their own thoughts.
- Use discussion strategies such as Think-Pair-Share - students are given a prompt, provided think time and then are invited to share thoughts with a partner in equal amounts of time (e.g. use a timer)



- Record/videotape learners or use handheld talking devices (Toobaloo/WhisperPhone) so they can hear themselves.

- Students will talk and listen in a more animated matter when they encounter engaging cross-curricular content and participate in inquiry-based learning.
- Explore the use of cooperative learning structures that allow all students to be actively discussing and listening to one another concurrently rather than where one child speaks at a time (e.g., Kagan Cooperative Learning).
- Stock classroom with creative tools that promote oral exploration, e.g. costumes, puppets, and props.
- Anchor Charts and Word Walls can support the development oral language skills.
- When preparing speeches, help students build their confidence and understand the thinking processes that take place in preparation for the talk: text features, signal words, formal vs. informal talks,

anticipating audience knowledge about familiar and unfamiliar words, managing gestures, creating a hook, summarizing, etc. Help students anticipate what to do in the event of a slip up or error. Guide them on how to respond to questions.

- Consider ways to provide students with a wider audience: create a digital story to share with peers (e.g., Toontastic app); present to other classes, school administrators, parents, special guests, and/or secret judges; record and post videos on classroom blog with links for grandparents, etc.

RESOURCES

Universally Speaking - Ages and Stages of Children's Communication Development from 5 to 11 (UK, 2011) https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/7412/universally_speaking_5-11_final.pdf

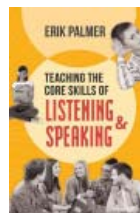
Instructional Strategies for Developing Oral Language, Sue McCandlish, 2012: <https://www.killeenisd.org/departmentDocs/c950/documents/StrategiesforDevelopingOralLanguage.pdf>

Five Components of Effective Oral Language Instruction, Dublin: <http://pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Oral%20Language%20Booklet%20PDF.pdf>

Listening and Speaking - First Steps into Literacy - Support document for Kindergarten Teachers, 2008, Manitoba: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/ela/list_speak/listening_speaking.pdf

Let's Talk about Listening, Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, 2009: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/Talk_about_listening.pdf

Range of Speaking & Listening activities for the classroom including how to prepare elementary students for a debate, UK website: <http://noisyclassroom.com/primary/ideas/get-started.html>



Palmer, E. (2014). *Teaching the Core Skills of Listening & Speaking*. ASCD - In addition to strategies shared in his book, Erik Palmer's website contains sample mini lessons *and rubrics*: <http://pvlegs.com/effectiverubrics/>



Scholastic, Literacy Place for the Early Years, Oral Language Developmental Checklist: http://www.scholastic.ca/education/lpeyx_teaching_support_grade1/images/pdfs/orallang_dev_chklist_g1.pdf

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Scholastic, Oral Language/Conversation Kits (Available at each level, K-3): <http://education.scholastic.ca/product/9781443003759>

Let's Talk About It - Oral Language Resource- <http://www.mondopub.com/c/@i1L0MXCaPlgCc/Pages/product.html?nocache@1+record@S5044>

A FEW THOUGHTS FROM EDUCATIONAL EXPERTS IN THIS AREA:



Oral Language is the child's first, most important, and most frequently used structured medium of communication. It is the primary means through which each individual child will be enabled to structure, to evaluate, to describe and to control his/her experience. In addition, and most significantly, oral language is the primary mediator of culture, the way in which children locate themselves in the world, and define themselves with it and within it (Cregan, 1998, as cited in Archer, Cregan, McGough, Shiel, 2012)



Ninio and Snow (1999) as well as Weiss (2004) assert that how well children develop conversational skills can influence how well they interact with others (as cited in Otto, 2006).



Research supports the fact that children's frequent participation in conversations has a positive impact on language development, particularly vocabulary. (Dickenson & Tabors, 2001; Girolametto, Weitzman, & Greenberg, 2004; Ruston & Schwanenflugel 2010)

CONSULTANT TIPS

- Ask more open-ended questions.
- Show and Tell could be modified to Show and Ask where students think of good questions to ask after a student who has shared.
- Enhance wait time so all children have time to formulate a response.
- Consider using a talking/listening prop (e.g. a teddy bear or First Nations talking stick).
- Keep discussion short - honour their attention spans (e.g. brain can focus for approx. number of minutes that corresponds to their age: 7 years old = 7 minutes).
- Incorporate listening and speaking tasks across the content areas.
- Minimize question-response interactions; facilitate conversation that springs from what another student says, listening, linking and building on ideas.
- Model speaking, listening and presentation skills so students see it in action.
- Build repertoire of discussion strategies (fishbowl, think-pair-share, etc)



Image source: http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/sites/default/files/images/native_american_talking_stick.jpg

SEE IT IN ACTION

A Kindergarten example - how speaking, listening and viewing goals were integrated in a student project - Who Am I?: <https://connectcapturecreate.com/2015/09/26/speaking-listening-and-viewing-a-must-see-project-by-guest-blogger-katie-cryan-leary/>

Listen & Learn With Learning Positions - K-5: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/student-learning-positions>

Poetry Open Mic - Grades 4-5: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/poetry-lesson-plan>

Grade 5 - Talk Moves - A Communication Strategy: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/developing-communication-skillshttps>

Grade 4 Science - Evidence-Based Academic Discussion: www.teachingchannel.org/videos/evidence-based-discussion-ousd

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CRITERIA FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

How does talk improve? Students learn to create spoken texts that:

- ✓ feature clearly delivered messages that increasingly provide more relevant detail with appropriate examples
- ✓ convey a speaker's confidence
- ✓ are responsive to a wider audience
- ✓ demonstrate an increasing precision of language (word choice, pronunciation)
- ✓ are more organised and coherent
- ✓ become more complex and use more sophisticated structures

Students become better able to:

- ✓ manage positive, constructive social interactions
- ✓ respond appropriately to misunderstanding
- ✓ cope with contradiction and disagreement
- ✓ participate in interactive conversations and create flow between group members
- ✓ use body language, proximity, posture, eye contact and voice (pacing, volume, tone, emphasis, prosody/fluency) to create an impact

How does listening improve? Students:

- ✓ demonstrate an active awareness of how to prepare for listening
- ✓ take this task more seriously and are clear on their purpose for listening
- ✓ have strategies for accomplishing the assigned task
- ✓ are better able to chunk and retain information
- ✓ learn to make predictions, infer and interpret aural texts
- ✓ draw on and expand their schema (apply new understandings to what they already knew)
- ✓ become more self-aware of their developing listening skills
- ✓ learn to tune into text features, intonation and signal words
- ✓ know where they lose the thread of the message

- and what questions they might ask to repair their understandings
- ✓ become more aware of their roles and behaviours in group situations and how they can support speakers

Source: http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/primary/english/assets/pdf/talk_listen/foj_tandl.pdf

STRATEGIES TO TARGET LISTENING SKILLS:

1. Use an **FM system** in the classroom. It makes it easier for all students in the classroom to hear over ambient noises coming from classmates, squeaky chairs, and loud ventilation systems. Teachers also benefit from reduced vocal strain and a decrease in need for repetitions.
2. Help students learn to **chunk the content of a message**, particularly relevant for learners who may have processing difficulties or may not have a deep background of vocabulary and grammar to access such as English Language Learners. Students listen to a text by seeking familiar words and referring to their bank of grammatical knowledge in order to work out the relationships between the main ideas and the sentences. This process is called *bottom-up processing*.

Classroom exercises to support bottom-up processing include helping students to retain input, recognize key words and transitions, and to listen for stress and intonation. Dictation, cloze listening and multiple choice questions that zoom in on detailed recognition can develop these skills.

3. Students should be encouraged to **draw on what they already know** and access schema to help them make sense of new texts. This type of processing is called *top-down processing*. It is particularly helpful to provide students with background knowledge and let them know what to expect when they hear a new text.

In order to develop top-down processing skills, teachers can guide students to anticipate questions related to the topic or situation and to infer the setting of a text, the role of the subjects in the text, causes or effects, and unstated details of a situation.

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<http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/oral-language-development-and-ells-5-challenges-and-solutions>

http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/printable_benchmarks.html

Understand More about Expressive Language Disorder (difficulty using spoken language): http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/inmdict/html/expressive_language_disorder.html

Understand More about Receptive Language Disorder (difficulty understanding spoken language): http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/inmdict/html/receptive_language_disorder.html

Communication Disorders: This detailed resource describes a full range of communication disorders and possible strategies to support learners: *Communication Disorders Handbook*, Newfoundland, 2000 <http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentsupportservices/publications/CommunicationDisordersHandbook.pdf>

ERLC Website: Technologies to support students with disabilities: <http://www.learningtechnologiesab.com/>

Detailed Resource List for Augmentative and Alternative Communication: <http://www.calgaryandarearcsd.ca/assets/Uploads/Documents-Page-Linked/AAC-Resources-2015-10-08.pdf>

STRATEGIES TO TARGET LISTENING SKILLS: CONT.

- 4. Prediction strategies** could help students access schema. For example, prior to listening, students might generate a set of questions they expect to hear and then confirm their predictions afterwards. They could generate a list of things they already know about a topic. They could read one speaker's part in a conversation and predict the other speaker's part, then listen and compare. Similarly, students could listen to part of a story or news event, predict or write an expected ending, and then listen to the actual ending and compare.
- 5.** At the outset, student might simply "notice" features or keywords in an aural text. To extend learning, students could advance to **restructuring activities**. For example, they might try out and experiment with the newly noticed language forms in order for it to become part of their repertoire. After listening, students might also benefit from tasks such as sequencing, true-false comprehension, picture identification, and summarizing.

Sources:

Richards, Jack. C. 1996. Teacher Learning in Language Teaching. New York: Cambridge University Press

<https://www.boystownhospital.org/knowledgeCenter/articles/Pages/UsingHearingAssistiveTechnologiesintheClassroom.aspx>

PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Learn Alberta, Inclusive Education Library - Div 1 and 2 Listening, Speaking and Working with Others Rubrics: <http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/ieptLibrary/lib03.html>

Classroom Observation Tool, UK 2012 (pages 6-8 specifically focus on how adults in the setting talk with children - good ideas for communication strategies): https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/93866/tct_bcrp_csc_final.pdf

Presentation Rubrics from Buck Institute - Project-Based Learning: <http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2014/02/4-great-rubrics-to-develop-students.html>

Sample rubrics that may assist with criteria development: <http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/btg/ed/evaluation/speaking.htm>

Oral Presentation Rubric from ReadWriteThink.org: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/printouts/oral-presentation-rubric-30700.html?tab=1#tabs>

MODIFICATIONS, SUPPORTS AND TECHNOLOGY TOOLS

Considerations for children who have hearing loss: http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/inmdict/html/hearing_loss.html

Considerations for English Language Learners: <https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/about/oral-language>