



CAMBRIDGE

Oracy and assessment

Developing confident communicators

Laura Kahwati

December, 2025

Housekeeping

Health and safety

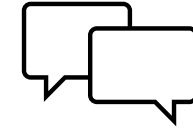
Fire safety

Washrooms

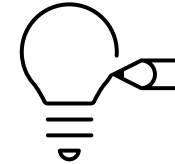


Breakout session objectives

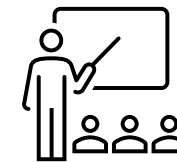
Why does talk matter now more than ever?



How does talk improve thinking and writing?



What are your next steps?



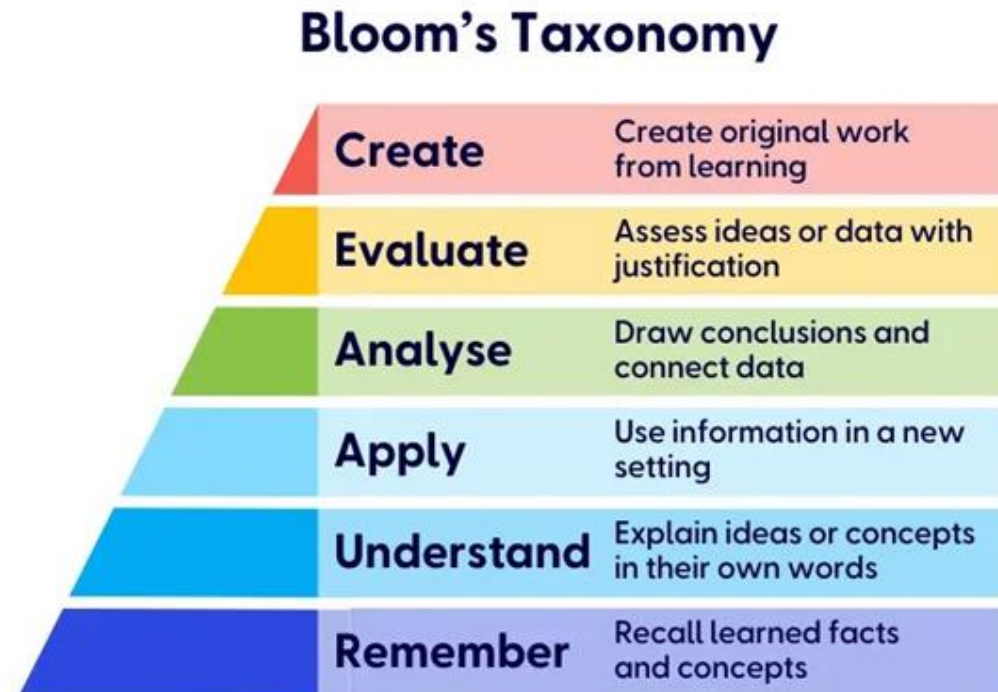


<https://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk/news/our-new-campaign-ensure-all-women-feel-they-belong>

What do you remember?

1. The This Girl Can campaign was launched by ... in ...
2. And funded by ...
3. It is a ... -media campaign, meaning it is found in broadcasting, print and online
4. The purpose of the campaign is to encourage ...
5. And to challenge ...
6. And celebrate ..
7. Also, to close the ...
8. And mainly, to empower ...the representation is deliberately ...
9. The actors are ...
10. The audience are primarily ...

What are we assessing?





Analysis and evaluation

Analyse how the advert represents women from various cultural backgrounds.
Consider costume, setting, and body language.

Evaluate how successfully the advert promotes inclusion and empowerment.
Give reasons for your opinion.

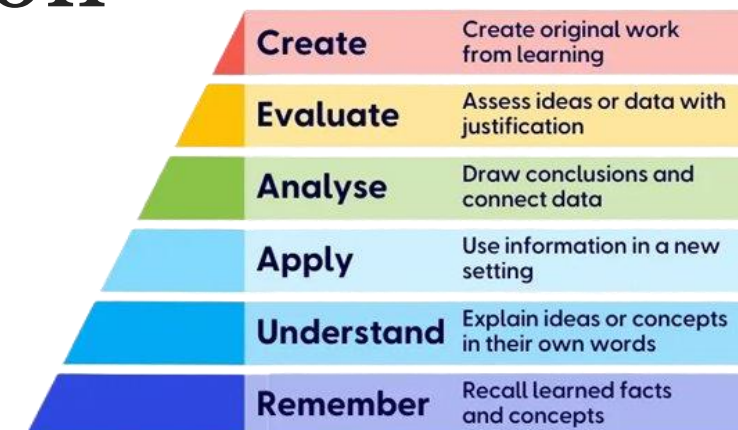
Analyse how the use of real people (rather than professional athletes or actors) creates meaning.

How does this advert differ from more traditional sports advertising (e.g. Nike or Adidas)?

Which approach do you think is more effective at connecting with diverse audiences, and why?

Give pairs one question each to discuss aloud first using the PEA talk structure, providing sentence stems for talk, like: “Can you build on that?”, “I’d like to challenge that...”

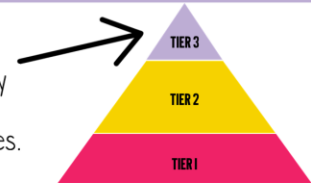
Bloom's Taxonomy



Vocabulary and terminology

TIER 3 VOCABULARY

Tier 3 vocabulary words are low-frequency words that are content specific. These words have distinct meanings and purposes.

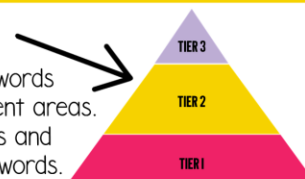


pterodactyl igneous osmosis
thesis electrolyte
isosceles aorta photosynthesis

MISS DECARBO

TIER 2 VOCABULARY

Tier 2 words are robust, high-frequency words that students encounter across the content areas. These words often have multiple meanings and are referred to as academic vocabulary words.

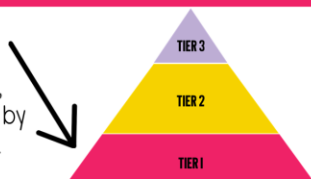


bolt fine harmony blush valuable
amiable rare astute

MISS DECARBO

TIER 1 VOCABULARY

Tier 1 vocabulary words consist of basic, familiar words that are commonly used by most students in everyday conversation.



sad baby bus phone
walk red clock rain
elephant

MISS DECARBO

Analyse how the advert represents women from various cultural backgrounds. Consider costume, setting, and body language.

Verb

Pronoun

Personal pronoun

Direct address

Noun

Denotes

Connotes

Soundtrack

Lyrics

Logo

Slogan

Representation

Facial expression

Costume

Establishing shot

Low angle

Group shot

Mid shot

Long shot

Two shot

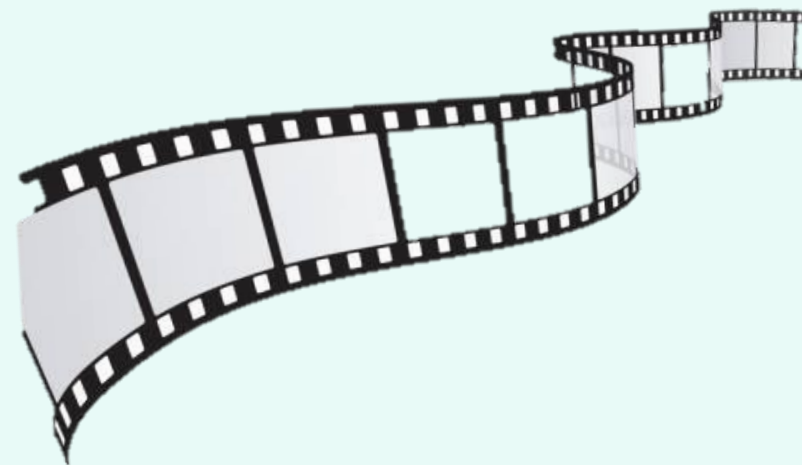
Over the shoulder shot

High angle shot

Close up (shot)

Tracking shot

Point of view shot



When combining camera angles, always use 'angle' before 'shot'.

For example:
a 'low-angle two-shot'.

Point – evidence – analysis

Answer 1:

The advert shows that Muslim women can enjoy exercise too. For example, it denotes a Muslim woman wearing a hijab while doing sport. This challenges stereotypes and shows sport is for everyone.

Answer 2:

The advert represents Muslim women as courageous and energetic. One scene denotes a Muslim woman wearing a sports hijab while working out, with bright colours that symbolise confidence and visibility. This challenges stereotypes about what sports clothing should look like, showing that modest dress can still be active and athletic. Additionally, it pushes back against traditional gender expectations, by showing women taking up space in sport with strength and pride. Furthermore, it honours cultural and religious identity by showing that all women should feel free to participate in sport in ways that make their identity something to be proud of.

Analyse how the use of real people (rather than professional athletes or actors) creates meaning.

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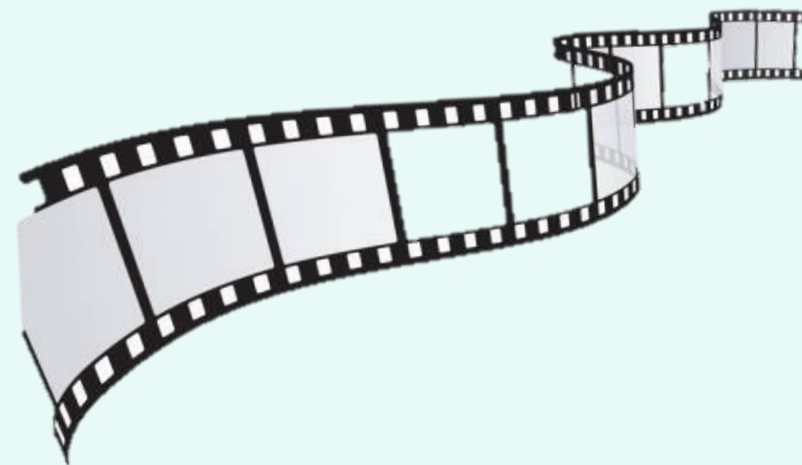
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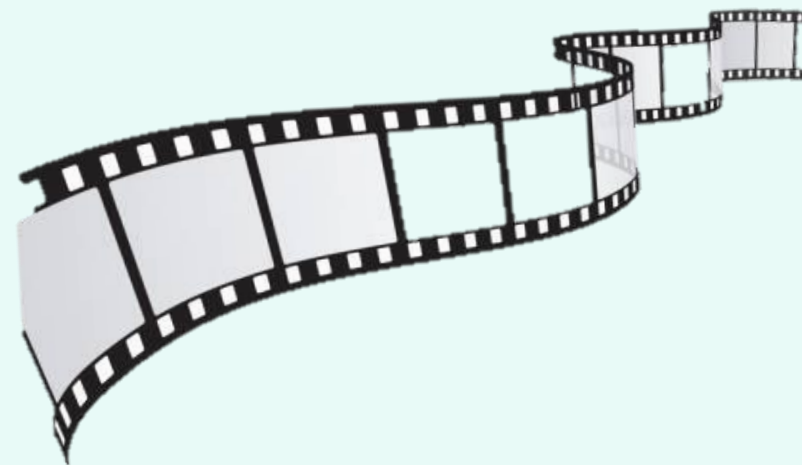
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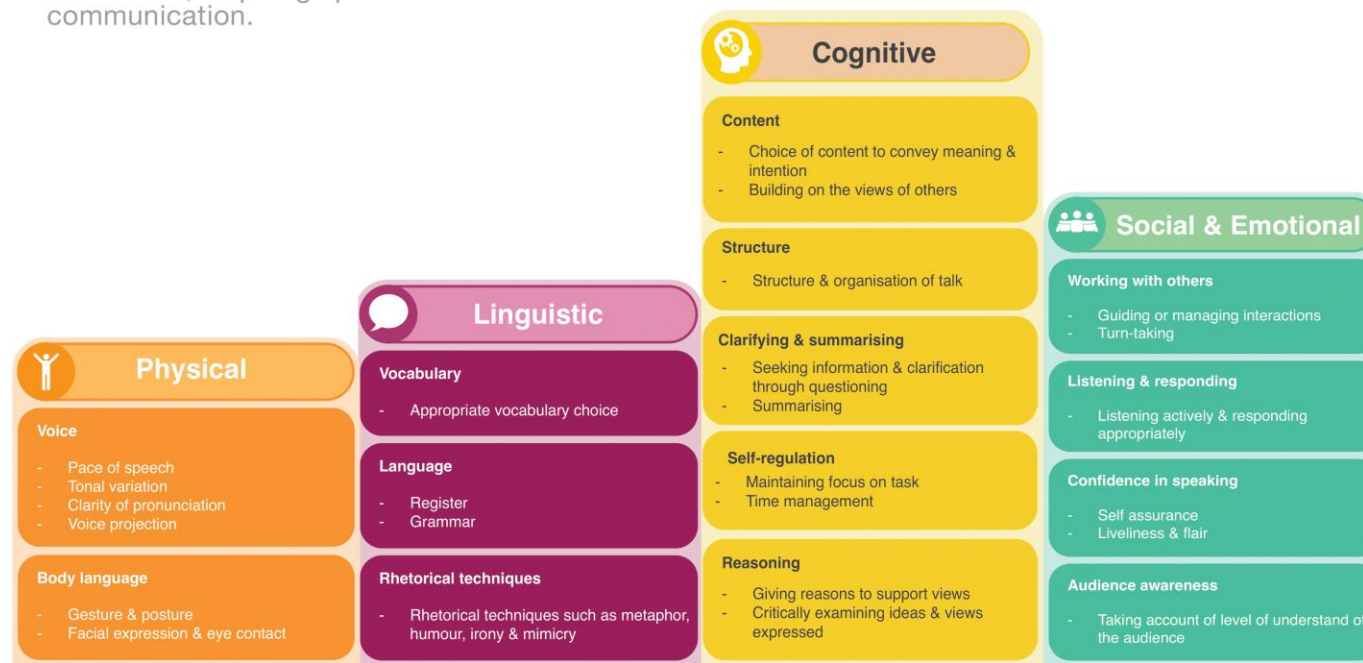
For example:
a 'low-angle two-shot'.

Assessing oracy skills

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.

Oracy
Cambridge



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Assessing oracy skills

Talk detectives



What does good oracy look & sound like?



		Who is doing this?	What are they doing?
	Physical	<p>Are they speaking clearly and at an appropriate volume?</p> <p>Do they use gestures to support the delivery of their ideas?</p>	
	Linguistic	<p>Are they using apt and varied vocabulary including appropriate and accurate use of relevant technical terms & literary devices?</p>	
	Cognitive	<p>Are their contributions relevant & interesting?</p> <p>Do they clarify & justify points?</p> <p>Do they develop, challenge and critique the ideas of others?</p>	
	Social & Emotional	<p>Do they guide or manage interactions by making appropriate contributions & encouraging others to contribute?</p> <p>Are they actively listening?</p>	

Oracy definition



Oracy refers to the skills involved in using spoken language to communicate effectively.

What is oracy?

The term 'oracy' was first used by a British professor of education, Andrew Wilkinson, in the 1960s to emphasise the educational importance of spoken language skills; he wished to put them on a par with literacy (reading and writing) skills (Wilkinson, 1965). Wilkinson defined oracy as 'the ability to use the oral skills of speaking and listening'.

In recent years, the term has come to be used more widely and internationally, reflecting a growing awareness of the importance of developing young people's spoken language skills for their own futures and those of their communities. Moreover, recent educational research has shown that the effective use by teachers of talk in the classroom – in terms of vocabulary, tone, etiquette and so on – can have a strong impact on their students' educational attainment. It has therefore been argued that oracy should be made part of the normal, mainstream school curriculum in all countries (English-Speaking Union, 2016).

Although cultural norms regarding politeness and the appropriate forms of language to use in different social settings may vary, the essential skills underpinning oracy are not specific to any language or culture. For example, the same key principles underpin how to make an effective spoken presentation to an audience, or use talk to work well in a group or team.

What does research tell us about oracy?

In recent years, researchers in developmental psychology, linguistics and education have emphasised the importance of talk in children's cognitive and social development (Whitebread et al. (Eds.), 2013). This idea was first expressed by the Russian psychologist Vygotsky, who recognised the central importance of language and interpersonal communication for cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978) and it has since been developed by other researchers (Daniels, 2001). Research from neuroscience and evolutionary psychology now supports the view that language has evolved as an integrated component of human cognition, rather than as a separate and distinct capacity (Mercer, 2013).

Humans have a great capacity for learning and, uniquely, a special capacity for learning language: which in turn enables us to learn from, and with, other people. By acquiring language, we become able to not just interact, but to interthink (Littleton & Mercer, 2013). That is, we are able to think not only as individuals, but in collaboration with other people. In this way, humans have (for better or worse) transformed the world.

However, young people depend on interaction with others for the development of their communication and thinking skills. Most will need the help of their teachers to become effective speakers and listeners. Through educational research, we now know some very practical ways that teachers can provide the relevant guidance and instruction.

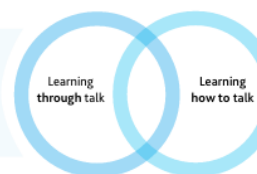
Two aspects of oracy: dialogic teaching and oracy education

It is useful to think of oracy having two aspects. The first essentially concerns a teacher's effective use of talk in the classroom to enable the interactive process of teaching and learning. This is called **dialogic teaching**. The second concerns the explicit teaching of spoken language skills to students: helping them learn how to talk. This is called **oracy education**.

Learning through talk

Using talk effectively for teaching and learning

Dialogic teaching



Learning how to talk

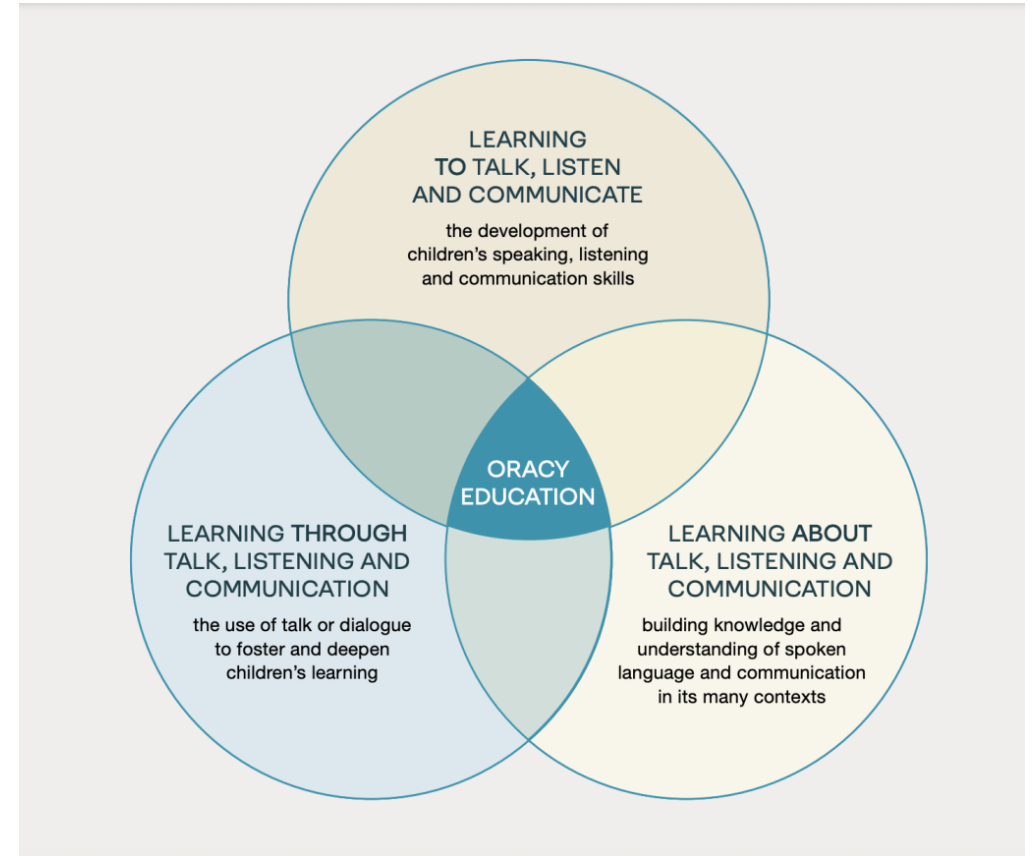
Developing children's spoken language skills

Oracy education

New definitions

Oracy can be defined as articulating ideas, developing understanding and engaging with others through speaking, listening and communication.

OEC, 2024



UK education and assessment

Striking the balance:
A review of 11–16
curriculum and
assessment
in England



OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Oracy
Education
Commission

We need
to talk.

The report of the Commission on the
Future of Oracy Education in England
October 2024



And the latest:

Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report

The conclusions and recommendations of the independent review of the curriculum, assessment and qualifications system in England.

From: [Department for Education](#)

Published: 5 November 2025

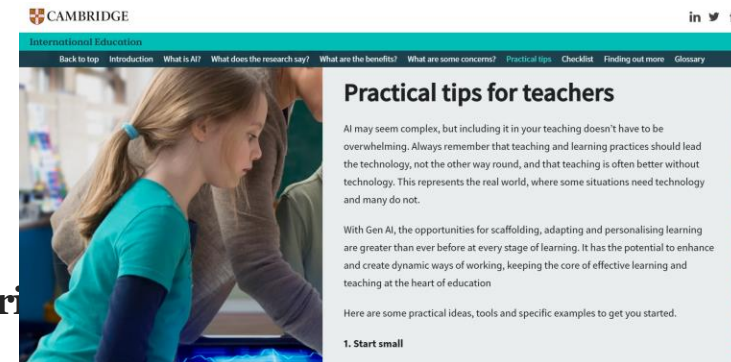
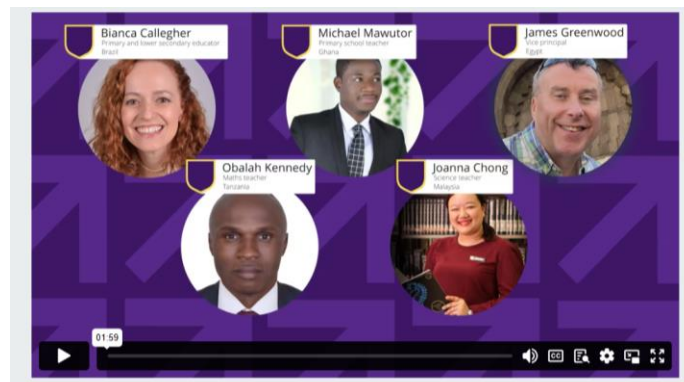
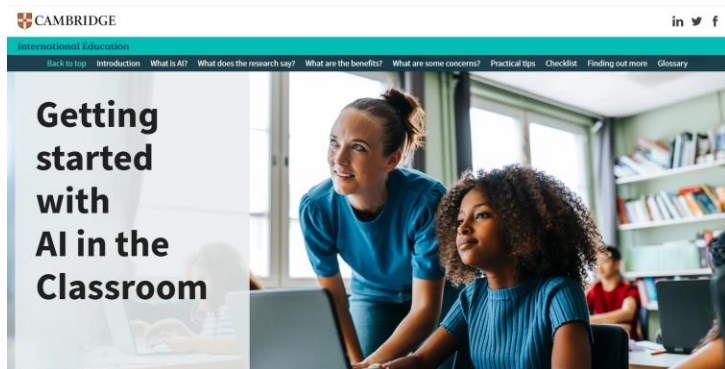
Last updated: 5 November 2025



Oracy Cambridge warmly welcomes the government's acceptance of the Curriculum and Assessment Review's recommendation to introduce a national oracy framework to complement the existing frameworks for reading and writing. This marks a significant and long-awaited step towards recognising spoken language as a fundamental component of education – essential not only for academic success, but also for participation in society and the world of work.

Getting started with AI in the classroom

- Introduces and develops key areas of teaching practice
- Links research to what happens in the classroom
- Includes practical ideas to help you get started
- Developed with Cambridge teachers



Unseen text: Analyse the use of media language in the following text:

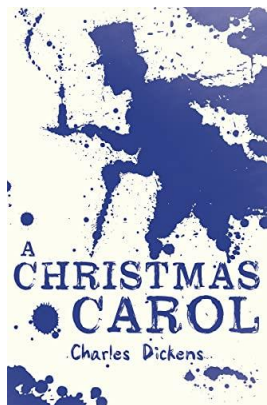


How did this lesson help you prepare for the exam question above?

How much assessment took place this lesson?

What classroom tasks will you enhance through talk?

Explore how Charles Dickens presents the character/theme of...



POINT – *In this extract, Charles Dickens ...* Make a specific point that answers the question

EVIDENCE – *For instance, ...* integrate a well chosen quotation into your own sentence.

ANALYSIS – Write a detailed analysis of the words and devices and what they mean

READER – Be sure to consider the effect on the reader

LINK it all to the social context of Victorian England *(You can also LINK back to the question and LINK to other parts of the novel)*

Dickens uses the *metaphor* of ...

The use of the *verb* ... connotes ...

This creates a sense of ...

The writer uses the character of ... in order to represent ...

This reflects the class divide / lack of medical treatment / highly religious beliefs in society at the time because ...

This reminds the reader / teaches the reader

Additionally

Moreover

Furthermore

Suggests

Generates

Connotes

Creates a sense of

Vocabulary

Dialogue

Adjective

Contrast

Connotations

Adverb

Imperative verb

Didactic

Pathetic fallacy

Simile

Metaphor

Exclamation

Superlative

Group roles



Editor-in-Chief

You are responsible for phrasing responses in a way that is thoughtful and eloquent – with clear paragraphing, accurate SPaG, correct use of quotation marks and preferably integrated quotations. You should proof-read all the time.



Devices Detective

You are responsible for checking that devices (**methods**) are being named correctly and that formal essay words and phrases (like discourse markers and alternatives for 'this suggests') are used well.



The Philosopher

You are always thinking about the meaning behind the methods, the connotations and the wider themes and concepts. You should also listen and build on the ideas of others, encouraging them to join in.

The poet presents falling in love as like being / similar to ...


The poet uses imagery like ... to create a sense of ...

The tone of the poem is ...

I feel like this poet is trying to teach us that ...

The theme of ... is presented in the poem through ...

Building on NAME's point, the poet also ...



- Speaker
- Metaphors
- Similes
- Figurative language
- Imagery
- Colour
- Seasons
- Alliteration
- onomatopoeia
- Short lines
- Enjambment
- Caesura
- Repetition
- Rhyme
- First person
- Second person
- Single stanzas
- Link end to beginning

Why respect matters

A 'child friendly' version of discussion guidelines:

Our rules for exploratory talk:

1. We will talk together to think about what to do.
2. We will share what we know with each other.
3. We will ask everyone to say what they think.
4. Everyone will listen carefully to others and consider what we hear.
5. We will give reasons for what we say.
6. We will pay attention and try to think of good ideas.
7. We will decide what to do only when everyone has said all they want.
8. We will try to agree about what we think.

Oracy Cambridge

The Hughes Hall Centre for Effective Spoken Communication



Exemplar discussion guidelines for exploratory talk

- Everyone in the group is encouraged to contribute.
- Contributions are treated with respect.
- Reasons are asked for.
- Everyone is prepared to accept challenges.
- Alternatives are discussed before a decision is taken.
- All relevant information is shared.
- The group seeks to reach agreement.

Chairs and tables conducive to listening

Groupings

Different groupings support different types of talk

Trios

Talk with two other people. Alternatively, talk to a partner while a third person listens in and summarises or critiques the discussion. Or two people talk and the third listens in to summarise and critique the discussion.



Traverse

Stand in two parallel lines opposite a partner. Change partners by moving one person down to the other end of the line.



Pair

Talk to a partner



Circle

Groups of six or more people face each other in a circle. You can step inside the circle, one at a time, to speak to the whole group.



Fishbowl

Similar to an onion, but the people in the inner circle face each other while the people on the outer circle observe the inner circle's discussion.



Onion

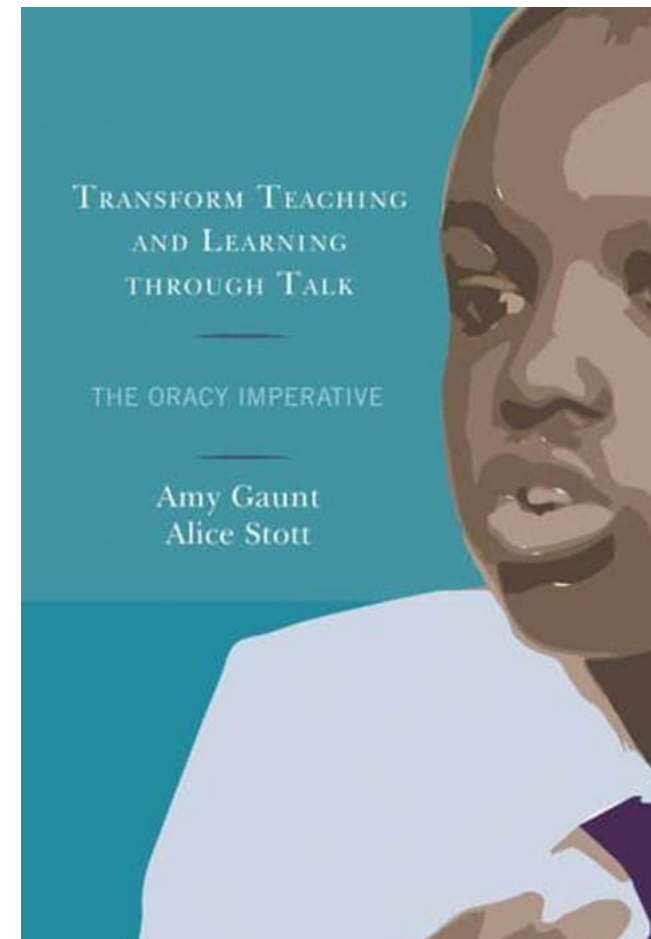
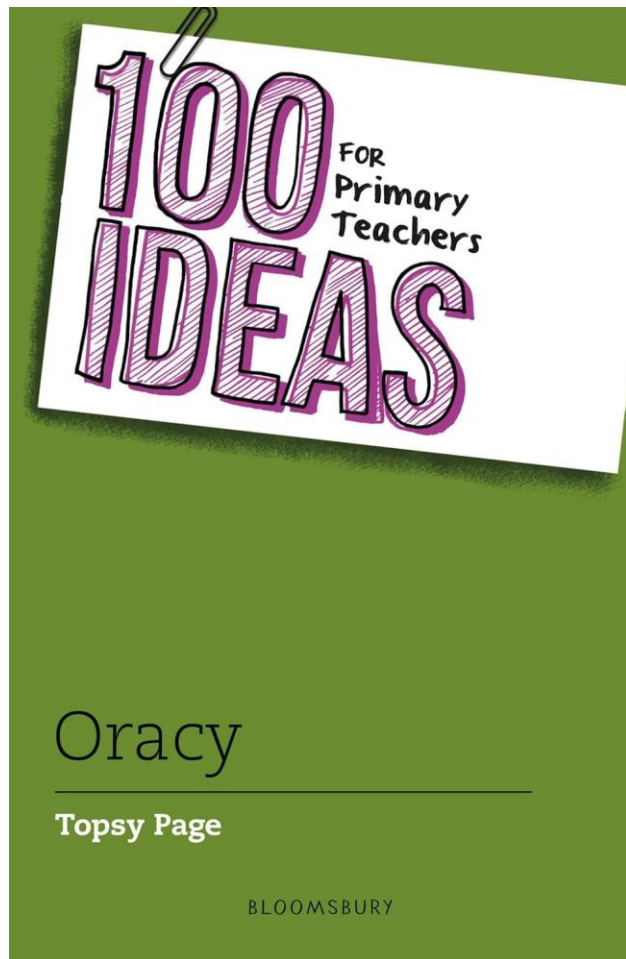
Form an inner circle and an outer circle. If you're in the inner circle stand back to back, facing a partner on the outer circle. Speak to a new partner by rotating the inner or outer circle.



Nest

Stand apart from each other and whisper your ideas to yourself.





What is the first thing that comes to mind for your subject?

A typical exam question

Assessment criteria

A topic that requires critical thinking

A key word you might spend the whole lesson teaching

A closed question you might find in an exam

A key fact that all learners need to know

A key skill that all learners need

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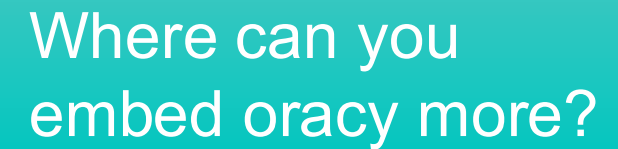
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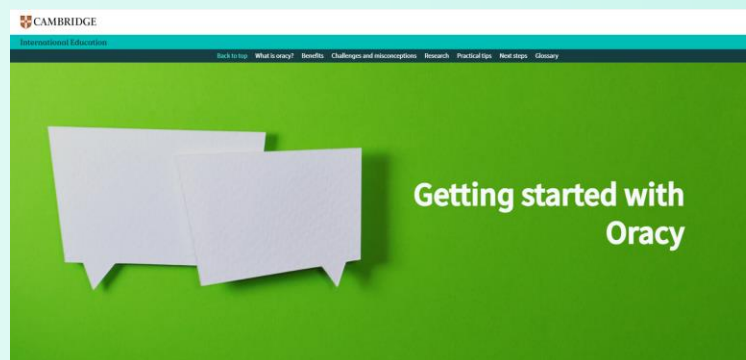
Where can you
embed oracy more?

Cambridge's online resources

Any questions?



- ✓ Education brief
- ✓ Animation
- ✓ Getting started with guidance
- ✓ Conference recordings
- ✓ Podcasts
- ✓ Blogs



Get in touch!



Laura's blog!



Cambridge Schools Conference, December 2025
Future-ready: preparing learners to thrive