

Oracy

What is oracy and why is it important?

Oracy is the art of talking and listening, which develops throughout Primary school into being able to offer opinions, present information and engage in debate. Talking and listening are essential for building children's comprehension skills – through discussing and sharing their ideas about what they are reading, and listening to other people's ideas, children expand their mental model of the text and increase their understanding.

Talking about books increases children's pleasure in reading, and this in turn can boost their mental health and wellbeing. Talk also has a positive impact on children's writing. By discussing and rehearsing what they want to write out loud, before putting pen to paper, they get the chance to try out and refine their ideas.

Importantly, talking and listening also boosts children's vocabulary, helping to reduce the language gap between children from more advantaged and less advantaged backgrounds. Likewise, it is beneficial for children with English as an additional language. By discussing new words and modelling how to use them in context, you can help children master these words and use them correctly in both speaking and writing.



How to boost oracy in Year 2

- Back-and-forth talk between you and the children is a really helpful way to introduce and reinforce key vocabulary and ideas that you want the children to understand. This can be used right across the school day, and it's a great way to enhance children's developing comprehension skills. Build talk into story time or book club time, and model how to talk about what you're reading. Encourage the children to chip in with ideas throughout the session.
- Instead of asking individual children to answer questions in a group or whole-class session, consider putting children into pairs to discuss what they're reading or answer a question between them. This ensures all children have an opportunity to contribute, including those who are normally less keen to do so. You can listen to the conversations and pick children with helpful or interesting ideas to feed back to the whole group. This approach also makes it easier to pick up and correct any misconceptions that children might have.
- Set clear expectations about behaviour around talking and listening, including turn-taking, listening politely and contributing constructively. This will help keep the general noise levels down too, as a noisy classroom makes it harder for children to hear and contribute to what's going on.
- Bug Club Guided Reading books are brilliant to use to boost oracy, as the books are designed to spark discussion and encourage children to share their opinions. The Guided Reading cards help teachers build opportunities to speak and listen into every session.