

9

Literacy Work Stations for Speaking, Listening, and Language

| Standards Covered in This Chapter | Lessons Described in This Chapter |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Speaking to Describe Things or Tell Stories | Let's Talk |
| Listening to Texts and Following Spoken Directions | Listen Closely Listening Games |
| Using Correct Grammar and Parts of Speech | Looking for Verbs |
| Expanding Vocabulary | Vocabulary Card Retelling |

Oral language is the foundation of all reading and writing children will do. It is defined as the system through which we use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings. In 1970, British educator James Britton made the profound statement, "Talk is the sea upon which all else floats" (164), which is often paraphrased as "Reading and writing float on a sea of talk." His theories on language and literacy shaped the progressive teaching of writing to young children in school.

Speaking, listening, and language must be fostered from early childhood through adolescence. Although one important component of oral language is vocabulary development, children must also learn how to pro-

nounce words, how to combine them to sound grammatically correct, and how to speak according to their situation (for example, at home versus at school). These are often sources of difficulty for students learning English as a second language, hindering their literacy development (August and Shanahan 2006).

Children who leave kindergarten and first grade able to say, "I *predict* that the *topic* of this *nonfiction* book is dinosaurs" or "The *character* feels *shy*, because she is new to this school" or "My mom *forbids* me to stay up late. I have to get *plenty* of sleep" are children who will most likely become strong readers and writers. Through listening and speaking, they have learned

the vocabulary and language structures they'll need while mapping sounds to decode and make meaning of text. Likewise, because writing is *talk written down*, these children will probably write more engaging, interesting pieces. Most likely, these are also the students who will succeed on standardized tests in grades three and above.

As an educator for almost forty years, I have often seen the power of oral language to transform a struggling reader or writer into a successful one. Alex was a second grader who had difficulty decoding words. Although he'd been taught phonics rules, he had difficulty applying them. The first time I asked Alex to read a book to me, he told me he couldn't read it because he hadn't heard it read aloud. If he'd heard a book, he'd remember the gist of the story so that when he read it on his own and came to unfamiliar words, he'd use beginning sounds and think about what made sense. Fortunately, this child had strong oral language skills, including a well-developed vocabulary.

Over time, I taught Alex strategies for solving unfamiliar words. It was especially helpful for him to use chunks of words and blend those *in sequence* to make a word that *made sense*. When he used his strengths of vocabulary and language, coupled with a few tools for decoding, he began to read a variety of stories and informational texts with increasing independence. Oral language was a crucial piece; it enabled this child to make meaning.

Similarly, I've met students with strong oral language skills who struggle with spelling but take risks as writers to get their messages on paper. Their confidence in speaking pushes them forward to record their ideas, even with unconventional spelling. For example, Jessica, a first grader, wrote the following journal entry:

I got a godn snak for my buth day. It is green. I have kreks to fed it.

She described her birthday gift as a green "garter snake" and said she has "crickets to feed it." She could have used simple words to write, "I got a snake. It is green. I like it." But because this child had strong oral language, she used more advanced vocabulary and complex sentence structure in her writing. A few days later, Jessica continued to take risks as a writer in this entry: "Yestrday my dad stat kolg. Wen did you go to kolg? He kam home lat last nite. He brot some books home thet didt hav pekchs." Even though she struggled with standard spelling of these more advanced

words (*started, college, late, brought, pictures*), Jessica used them because this is how she spoke. Her language gave her confidence as a writer.

Oral language development begins at birth as humans are surrounded by voices. Babies as young as six weeks old coo and play with sounds. Between twelve and eighteen months of age, toddlers begin naming objects and people using single words, like *mama, dada, juice, shoes*. As they approach age two, they start to string words together to make meaning—*Tea hot. More cookie. Go bye-bye*. By the time they enter kindergarten, children are able to converse in more complex sentences to communicate with others.

I constantly name things in my toddler granddaughter's environment and encourage Chloe to repeat what I say, even if it's an approximation. When she points to her puppies and says, "Og," I say, "Yes, those are dogs. Chloe has two dogs, Meat and Toby. Let's count your dogs. One, two." I also sometimes hear her jibber-jabber away with vocalizations that sound much like sentences in their intonation. She is playing with language that will eventually become words and sentence strings. I listen to her in wonder and remember that learning to talk requires time, exposure, and practice.

Our children need the same things at school—to be surrounded with language, bathed in rich vocabulary, and given opportunities to use words and sentence structures they've heard. It's our job as teachers to accept students' approximations and scaffold them as they attempt to use new vocabulary and speak in more complex sentences in Standard English.

One way to do this is by expecting children to speak in sentences (with support, as needed) during whole- and small-group instruction. Yes, it's quicker and easier to accept one- or two-word responses, but a stronger foundation is built when children become accustomed to speaking in sentences. For example, when I recently asked kindergartners about things the boy liked in the little book *Things I Like* by Isabella Rivas (2009), they responded with one- or two-word answers: *Pizza. Some water. Grapes. Flowers*. When I asked them to give me a sentence (and provided scaffolding), the children spoke using more complex language, such as "The boy liked bread" and "He likes flowers, so they put some on the table." When a student said, "He gots some water," I said, "Yes. He got some water. At school we say, 'He got some water.'" I then gave the child a minute to repeat this "school" way of talking.

As children progress from kindergarten through third grade, it is important to create structure that provides norms that encourage students to talk about what they're learning. Sentence frames, such as the "conversation cards" I've included in this book, help students develop *accountable talk*, which Michaels, O'Conner, Hall, and Resnick (2002) have found helps students move beyond completing tasks to developing conceptual understanding—a much deeper learning goal. Accountable talk helps students learn to ask for and furnish evidence to support their thinking as they read, write, and talk together.

We need to give students as many opportunities as possible to speak so that they will develop oral and academic vocabulary. A silent classroom isn't necessarily an effective, well-run classroom. One of the reasons I believe literacy work stations are so important and successful is that children are allowed and expected to talk with partners during this independent learning time. In this chapter, we'll take a look at ways children might develop speaking, listening, and language at stations.

Speaking to Describe Things or Tell Stories

When looking at the literacy needs of students, especially in the early grades, I recommend that teachers examine children's oral language development along with reading and writing. For those students who need more practice in building oral language, try setting up a "Let's talk" station. This will give them opportunities to practice talking with each other in sentences to expand their language and vocabulary.

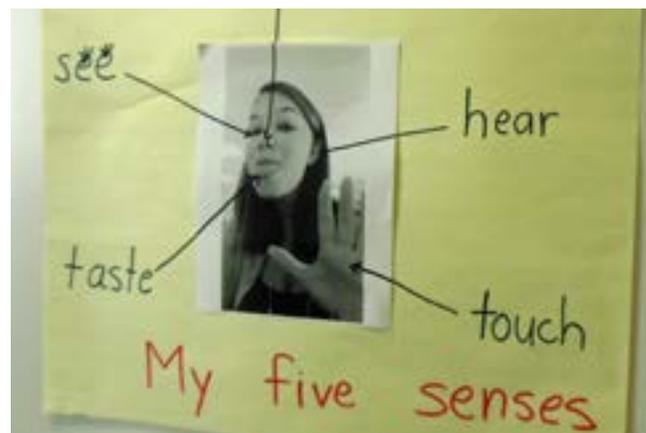
I first got the idea for this station while working in schools with a high concentration of low-income students in Denver. Because there were many ELL students who needed oral language development, the schools had purchased a program from Mondo called "Let's Talk About It," which included flip charts of large photos related to science and social studies. These charts were used in whole- or small-group instruction to stimulate conversations with children about what they saw in the pictures. For example, when students examined a photo of a girl exploring flowers in a spring garden, with teacher prompting they said things like, "The girl is in a garden. She's looking at pink flowers. I think the flowers smell sweet." They also added handwritten labels to the photo using sticky notes, and they often wrote about the picture, too.

After the flip charts and sticky notes were used during instruction, they were recycled into a "Let's talk" station for partners to use independent of the teacher. The familiar photos and vocabulary labels provided appropriate prompts for children's talk. At this station, children could talk about, label, or write about the photos.

Even without the Mondo oral language kit, you can do similar work with children in whole- or small-group settings. Use photos you already have and provide prompts to help kids speak in sentences. Make a "Five Senses" anchor chart, as pictured below, and prompt kids by asking them to tell what they see or might hear, smell, taste, or feel if they were in the picture. Use sticky notes to create vocabulary labels for items in the photos. Kids will enjoy manipulating the labels (which provide scaffolds for speech).

You might borrow fine-art prints from a local art teacher or download them from online art museums. Real objects, especially related to science and social studies topics (such as rocks and minerals; maps and globes) can also be used to promote conversation. During a study of butterflies, we used a wordless photo book picturing all kinds of specimens. The possibilities are endless. Move the materials you've been teaching with into a "Let's talk" station, and ask your students for ideas of things they'd like to talk about, too.

To add an extra dimension to "Let's talk," add a recording device, such as an iPad or a digital voice recorder. Children record themselves talking and then play it back to listen to their language. Listening to themselves speak gives students valuable feedback and motivates them to talk. I found that when kids get to record themselves, they are really excited about producing even more oral language.



Make a "Five Senses" chart with kids to use during whole- and small-group lessons. Also provide a small copy for them to use at the "Let's talk" station.

Sifting Through the Standard: Speaking to Describe Things or Tell Stories

What It Is

Speaking is an important part of oral language development. We speak to give information, to express ideas or feelings, and to ask questions. Talk can take the form of discussions, conversations, or oral reports. The word *talk* originates from the German for “tale” and “tell.”

Why It's Important

- Kids love to talk! Whenever we can harness that talk for learning, time will be used more efficiently in the classroom.
- Children who can express ideas and stories cohesively when speaking usually read and write in similar ways.
- Children who verbally use more mature speech (in both words and sentence structure) typically read and write at higher levels than students with less developed oral language.

Student Prerequisites

- Listening is a prerequisite to speaking. It is important to hear advanced vocabulary spoken in order to learn to speak those same words. This helps with pronunciation and syntax as well as comprehension.
- It is helpful for native Spanish speakers to understand cognates, or word derivatives. For example, if a Spanish-speaking child uses the word *inevitable* in Spanish, a connection can be made to that same word (with a different pronunciation) in English.

Academic Vocabulary

Kindergarten:

- *describe*
- *people*
- *places*
- *things*
- *events*
- *details*
- *text*
- *topic*
- *use a complete sentence*

First grade:

- *ideas*
- *feeling*
- *information*
- *tell stories*
- *retell stories*
- *in order*
- *conversation*
- *sensory details*

Second grade:

- *facts*
- *descriptive details*
- *clarify*
- *conversation*
- *coherent sentences*

Third grade:

- *report*
- *understandable rate*
- *eye contact*
- *enunciation*
- *volume*
- *visual media*
- *organize ideas chronologically*
- *clear and concise*

Sifting Through the Standard: Speaking to Describe Things or Tell Stories *(continued)*

Real-World Connections

- In everyday situations, speaking clearly to communicate is an important life skill. People who can express themselves well typically are more successful in relationships both at work and at home.
- Speaking effectively is an important leadership skill.

Example Test Questions

- Although speaking is usually not formally tested, it does affect how children score on tests of reading comprehension, writing, and vocabulary.
- A study by Justice, Mashburn, and Petscher (2013) found that poor comprehenders in fifth grade (that is, those with poor reading comprehension despite good decoding abilities) had evidenced weak language skills as early as fifteen months of age compared with their age-matched peers who went on to become good comprehenders and poor decoders.
- The NELP report (2008) found that early language skills were predictive of later reading comprehension development but much less predictive of early decoding skills.

Team Planning Protocol: Speaking to Describe Things or Tell Stories—First Grade

Standard We're Teaching

First grade: Speaking audibly and using appropriate language, recite poems, rhymes, songs, and stories, with careful attention to sensory detail when describing people, places, things, and events.

Academic Vocabulary We'll Use and Expect to Hear

- *describe*
- *people*
- *places*
- *things*
- *events*
- *sensory details*
- *use a complete sentence*

Whole-Group Ideas

- Model how to describe people, places, things, and events using sensory details (provide objects, fine-art prints, and photos for kids to describe).
- Make lists of words on anchor charts that describe using the five senses.
- Read and recite poetry together.

Partner Practice at Literacy Work Stations

“Let’s talk” station: Kids work with partners to orally describe familiar objects, photos, or fine-art prints. They can record their voices on an iPad or other recording device and then listen to themselves.

Poetry station: Students read familiar poems together and practice trying to recite them from memory.

Writing station: Children write poems of their own using sensory details. They don’t have to rhyme but should use language that tells what the writer sees, hears, smells, tastes, or feels (as in touch) when observing an object, people, or an event.

Lessons That Last: Whole-Group Mini-Lesson Plan for Speaking to Describe Things or Tell Stories—First Grade

Let's Talk

Focus: speaking in complete sentences; using sensory details to describe people, places, things, and events

Method to Maximize Student Engagement: use of an interesting object, photo, or fine-art print to describe; anchor chart made with students, including sensory details; cube to toss with a word and matching picture label on each side: "people," "place," "thing," "event," "action," "idea"; opportunity to record speech and listen back via iPad or other media

Model: how to describe people, places, things, and events using details related to our five senses while speaking in sentences

Prompting for Independence:

- "Describe the _____ using sensory details about what you see, hear, touch, taste, or smell."
- "Tell us more. What else do you notice? What else could be happening?"
- "Use a sentence. I'll help you get started. 'I think you could hear . . .'"

Mini-Lesson Procedure:

1. Show the class an interesting object, a photo, or a fine-art print of something they could describe using sensory details. For example, you might display a colorful pumpkin in the fall or a bouquet of spring flowers. You might use a photograph of something your class enjoyed doing together, such as going on a field trip or taking a walk around the school. Or you might borrow a fine-art print from a local art teacher or museum (or simply use an image in the public domain found online). For this lesson, I'm using Georges Seurat's painting *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*.
2. Tell children they'll take turns describing or telling about what they see (and hear, smell, taste, feel). You might make an anchor chart with the five senses on it (as pictured on page 241) and encourage kids to look at the painting/object/photo and tell what they see or might hear, smell, taste, and feel (if they touched it).
3. You might also use a cube with the sides labeled "people," "place," "thing," "event," "action," and "idea." Take turns tossing the cube and having children describe what they touched. For example, if they touch the word *people*, they might say, "There are many people in the painting. I see lots of families, and they're dressed up like on Sunday. I hear many people talking in soft voices and just relaxing." Keep going around the room inviting others to add comments to the first one. "There are people of all ages—moms and dads and children. The women are wearing long skirts, so I think this is long ago." "Almost everyone is wearing hats, not like today." Or if they touched *event*, they might say, "Maybe it's a holiday in the summer. Lots of people have umbrellas to protect themselves from the sun, which is probably hot. There are smells of hot dogs cooking at a stand away from the water. Maybe they'll have fireworks when the sun goes down."
4. You could also use sticky notes to record specific vocabulary you'd like students to use when working with these photos or objects. Use advanced vocabulary (for example, *relaxing*, *finest apparel*, *protect*, *stand*). Have students manipulate the notes to label the items, and use those words when speaking.
5. Record the language of your class by using a recording device, such as an iPad. Then play it back for all children to hear. Have students point to the part of the body they're using when they sense something said. For example, when they hear, "I smell . . .," they point to their noses.

On-the-Spot Assessment: Are students able to describe using sensory language? Are they speaking in complete sentences? Which students need scaffolds to speak in sentences or to extend their ideas?

Connections to Whole-Group Mini-Lesson

Independent Reading Connection: Invite young children who can't read all the words in their books to tell the story using the pictures. Have them describe what they see and experience in the illustrations, using sensory details. For students who need encouragement, you might provide an iPad for recording and playing back.

Small-Group Connection: Do this same activity with children who need additional support in small group. Use objects, photos, or fine-art prints and toss the cube, much as you did in whole group, or use wordless picture books as included in the "Mentor Texts" section. With a smaller group, children have more opportunities to speak. Record and play back their language. Use the "Five Senses" anchor chart, too, to encourage sensory language.

Writing Connection: During writing workshop, model and give kids opportunities to write about the same objects, photos, and art prints they have talked about. Then move these and related objects, photos, and prints children have talked about into the writing station. After students have described them orally, it will be easier for them to write about them. Likewise, model how to add labels or sentences to the wordless picture books you have used in small group. Students might use these books at the writing station and add labels and sentences to pages using sticky notes.

Evaluation: Use a rubric, such as the ones in Figures 9.1 and 9.2, to evaluate how students' speaking is improving. Teach children how to self-evaluate as they listen to recordings of themselves, too.

Figure 9.1 Sample Rubric for Speaking to Describe Things or Tell Stories (for Teachers)

| Student: _____ Date: _____ | Yes | No | Sometimes |
|---|-----|----|-----------|
| Verbally describes people, places, things, events, and actions that appropriately match objects, photos, prints, and pictures | | | |
| Includes sensory details while describing verbally | | | |
| Uses increasingly complex vocabulary in verbal descriptions | | | |
| Oral sentence structure is becoming more complex when describing | | | |
| Speaks clearly and audibly while describing | | | |
| Speaks in complete sentences | | | |

Figure 9.2 Sample Rubric for Speaking to Describe Things or Tell Stories (for Students)

| Student: _____ Date: _____ | Yes | No | Sometimes |
|---|-----|----|-----------|
| I describe people, places, things, events, and actions. | | | |
| I describe what I see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. | | | |
| I use big words. | | | |
| I speak so others can hear and understand. | | | |
| I speak in complete sentences. | | | |



A small group works on oral language by using a cube (pictured on page 249) to prompt student talk.

Mentor Texts for Modeling: Speaking to Describe Things or Tell Stories

Use wordless picture books, such as the following:

- *The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs
- *Chalk* by Bill Thomson
- *Pancakes for Breakfast* by Tomie dePaola
- *The Farmer and the Clown* by Marla Frazee
- *Journey* by Aaron Becker
- *Hunters of the Great Forest* by Dennis Nolan
- *Flashlight* by Lizi Boyd
- *Hank Finds an Egg* by Rebecca Dudley
- *The Girl and the Bicycle* by Mark Pett

- *Unspoken* by Henry Cole
- *Draw!* by Raul Colon

Use fine-art prints, such as the following:

- *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte* by Georges Seurat, 1884
- *Starry Night* by Vincent van Gogh, 1889
- *The Great Wave Off Kanagawa* by Katsushika Hokusai, 1829–32
- *American Gothic* by Grant Wood, 1930
- *Ram's Head White Hollyhock and Little Hills* by Georgia O'Keeffe, 1935
- *Self-Portrait with Monkey* by Frida Kahlo, 1938
- *The Apartment* by Jacob Lawrence, 1943

Teaching Tips for Speaking to Describe Things or Tell Stories Across the Grades

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| In Pre-K and Kindergarten | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young children need many opportunities to talk to peers and adults. • When reading aloud, be sure to stop and give kids the chance to turn and talk to a partner about what you've read. This encourages active listening and improves speaking as well as comprehension. Then ask several students to tell what they talked about with their peer. • Young children often call out to make comments or ask questions during read-aloud. Teach students to raise their hands and take turns, but don't discourage them from asking questions. |
| In Grades One–Two | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in grades one and two need lots of chances to talk, too. A silent classroom is not one where active learning is occurring. • Literacy work stations give children the opportunity to talk with one another about what they're doing and learning. Be sure partners are working <i>together</i> and not just sitting side by side doing work. Their collaboration invites conversation. • Provide an iPad or digital recording device at the "Let's talk" station, to increase students' motivation to speak and to provide accountability. |

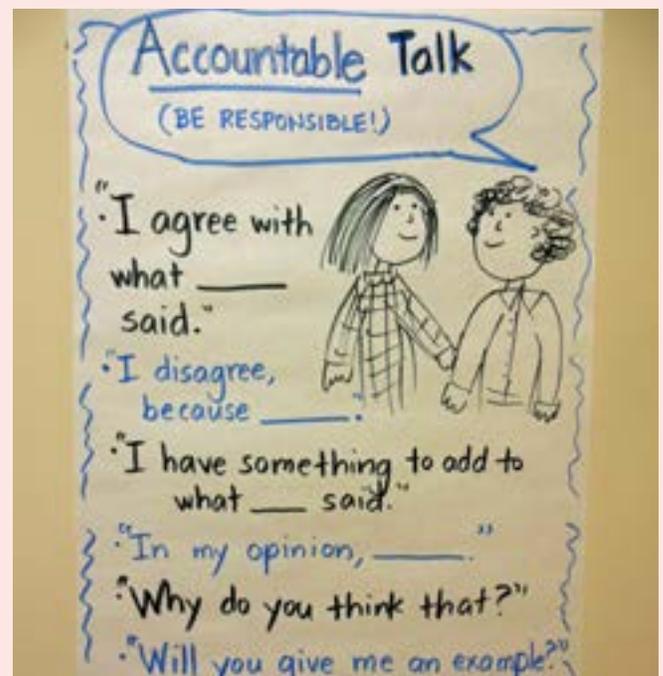
Teaching Tips for Speaking to Describe Things or Tell Stories Across the Grades *(continued)*

- In Grades Three and Up
- Big kids like to talk, too! Just because they're older doesn't mean their oral language has fully developed.
 - Continue to provide objects, photos, prints, and topics for students to describe and discuss. Connect the objects to content-area learning to develop language that will help students as they read and write. Teach them to use accountable talk by asking one another to support their ideas with evidence. Accountable talk charts are good visual reminders to help develop deeper thinking and language.
 - Continue to provide recording devices at talking stations. Older students also enjoy recording themselves and listening to their language.
 - At these levels, kids should expand their talk to orally reporting on topics. You might include a news-reporting station where students practice orally summarizing current events and presenting the news items to the class.

Sample Anchor Charts for Sensory Language for Speaking



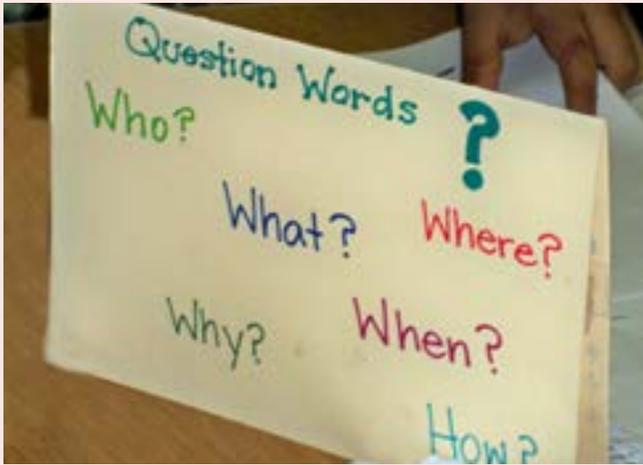
This simple anchor chart is an interactive one. Sticky notes with the five senses can be removed and used on text.



This anchor chart with reminders for speaking clearly and audibly was made with intermediate students.



Another anchor chart for using the five senses to observe and describe people, places, events, or objects uses student photos and can be personalized for your class. This one was developed in a bilingual classroom.



Tent-folded tabletop charts on groups of student desks help kids with accountable talk for questioning. The other side of the chart includes a small version of the anchor chart shown to the left.

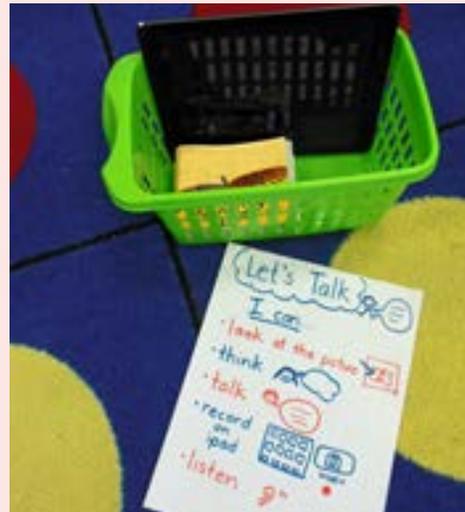


The "I Can" list reminds kids what to do at another "Let's talk" station. They can label the photo, talk about the picture, or make up a story about it.

Literacy Work Stations for Speaking



Partners take turns talking about the large photos. They take a clothespin (with a red or green colored dot on it) each time they speak. This encourages equal turn-taking. One child takes red; the other green. The "I Can" list helps them remember their choices at this station. **Change photos students work with over time. Use photos of familiar places and activities around the school or from field trips your class has taken. You can also borrow fine-art prints from your art teacher or a local art museum.**



At this "Let's talk" station, partners use a wordless book of photos to talk about butterflies, a science topic of study. They record themselves on an iPad and then listen to the recording.



An Easi-mic can also be used for young children to record and then play back their talk.



Kids use a prompting cube with a fine-art print for oral descriptions. It can be labeled “people,” “places,” “things,” “actions,” “color,” and “size.” A similar cube could have parts of speech (“names/nouns,” “actions/verbs,” “describing words/adjectives”) on it for older students. **The cube can be tossed to prompt children’s talk at oral language stations. Each face has a word/picture cue to remind kids what to discuss: people, places, actions, things, size, color.**



At an observation (or science) station, partners use hand lenses to observe natural objects such as shells, rocks, and leaves, and then talk with each other about what they notice. The five senses cards remind them to observe using sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. Kids love wearing lab coats, too! Children can also read related science books or write about what they observe here. **Over time, change out observation objects so they correspond to science topics of study for your grade level. You might add a recording device—such as an iPad—to record student conversations, too.**



An 8½-by-11-inch photo of the forest is masked by a piece of plain paper the same size but folded in fourths. One quarter has been cut out to make a viewing space. Kids work together, observing and describing one-fourth of the photo at a time. They fold another piece of white paper in fourths and use it to write their observations.



Students use an app for speaking (Tell About This) on the iPad. They click on a photo, which reads them a prompt, such as “Describe your favorite farm animal,” and then record themselves talking. They can play back their recording. **This can be used before kids write at the writing station or at the iPad station for speaking. Puppet Pals and Chatter Kids are great apps for this, too.**

Listening to Texts and Following Spoken Directions

The majority of standards within the Common Core Speaking and Listening strand focus on speaking. But there are several references specific to listening (for example, listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion, gaining the floor in respectful ways, and listening to texts read

aloud or to information presented orally or through other media). Other states have separate listening standards that add following oral directions to those mentioned above.

Many adults (and kids) are better at speaking than listening. Watch people having conversations. Are they listening to each other or waiting for their turn to speak? How do you feel when you are interrupted by an adult or a student? Children can benefit from being

taught how to listen carefully—to each other and to texts read aloud. It’s a life skill worth spending time on!

Likewise, it’s difficult for many students (and adults) to follow spoken directions, especially those that include several steps. Recently, I had an opportunity to figure out why this is such an important skill. I was traveling alone in an unfamiliar city at night and went to a movie. Alas, my cell phone died during the film, and I didn’t have a charger or GPS in the car. Panic descended on me as I realized I’d have to ask someone how to get to my hotel and then try to *remember* those oral directions.

I listened very carefully to the parking attendant who gave me directions. Then I followed the advice I’d

recently given a teacher whose kids were struggling to follow multistep oral directions: repeat the steps, one at a time, while visualizing the steps in order, and this will help you remember what to do. Fortunately, it worked! And it reinforced for me how important it is as we rely more and more on technology and automation to teach students how to listen effectively.

Because of the importance of listening both at school and in life, I’ve included two different kinds of listening work to do with students in this section: listening for information and listening to follow directions. Please examine your specific state standards and adapt the following ideas to meet the needs of your students.

Sifting Through the Standard: Listening to Texts and Following Spoken Directions

What It Is

- Lundsteen (1979) considered *hearing* a physical act and *listening* a mental act.
- To listen is to give attention to things we hear. Listening is an active process in which we take notice of and act on what others say.
- As we listen, we choose to respond to advice or a request.
- When we listen, it’s important to make meaning from what’s being said before we respond.
- State standards include several components of listening:
 1. listening to others and taking turns
 2. listening to texts and information presented orally or through other media
 3. listening to step-by-step directions

Why It’s Important

- People have a basic human need to be heard and understood.
- Listening has been estimated to make up as much as 55 percent of oral communication.
- Listening well affects our job effectiveness as well as the quality of our relationships with others.
- Listening comprehension precedes reading comprehension. If a child has difficulty making inferences when text is read aloud, that student will most likely have trouble inferring while reading as well.

Student Prerequisites

- In order to listen, students must be able to hear. Auditory acuity and processing is important.
- Although it may not be a prerequisite, removing auditory distractions (for example, background music, the roar of a classroom air-conditioning unit) can help students listen more carefully.

Academic Vocabulary

- Kindergarten:
- *conversation*
 - *rules for discussion*
 - *take turns*
 - *listen to others*
 - *listen attentively*
 - *speak about the topic being discussed*
 - *clarify understanding*
 - *follow directions*
 - *sequence*
 - *in order*
 - *two-step directions*

Sifting Through the Standard: Listening to Texts and Following Spoken Directions *(continued)***Academic Vocabulary**

- First grade:
- *speak one at a time*
 - *build on others' talk*
 - *clear up confusion*
 - *clarify information*
 - *restate directions*
 - *give instructions*
 - *sequence of events*
- Second grade:
- *gaining the floor*
 - *respectful*
 - *linking comments*
 - *further explanation*
 - *three-step directions*
 - *four-step directions*
 - *multistep directions*
- Third grade:
- *make eye contact*
 - *face the speaker*
 - *stay on topic*
 - *elaborate*
 - *series of related sequences*

Real-World Connections

- Listening is required at school, at home, and in the workplace.
- Listening is needed to learn a language. Young children listen before and as they learn to speak.
- Three of Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989) relate to communication and listening, including Habit 5, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood."

Example Test Questions

Some standardized tests, such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, have a listening component in kindergarten through grade two. Students listen to short scenarios followed by comprehension questions, all presented orally. They must follow directions and think analytically.

Team Planning Tool: Listening to Texts and Information Presented—Third Grade**Standard We're Teaching**

Third grade: Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Academic Vocabulary We'll Use and Expect to Hear

- *determine main idea and supporting details*
- *view and listen to information presented in multimedia*
- *conversation*
- *elaborate*
- *ask for clarification*

Team Planning Tool: Listening to Texts and Information Presented—Third Grade *(continued)*

Whole-Group Ideas

- Read aloud informational texts or show short videos related to what you're studying in science and social studies.
- Model how to do close viewing of a video (or close listening to a text). Show the video several times and have kids use clipboards and paper to take notes. Do the same with multiple read-alouds of a text. Set a different purpose for listening or viewing each time (for example, pay attention to the illustrations, or the use of text features, or the use of music).

Partner Practice at Literacy Work Stations

Listening station: Students listen to a recorded nonfiction book. They might listen to it two times for different purposes, taking notes each time on a clipboard or recording sheet. Then they have a conversation about what they learned, taking turns and elaborating on their ideas each time they listen. As they listen, provide text-dependent questions to have them cue into:

- First listen—the gist of what it's about (main idea and key details)
- Second listen—craft and structure (repeated words; who the author is) or knowledge and ideas (find evidence that the author . . .)

Viewing station: Have partners view preselected videos (related to science and social studies), watching and listening to them several times. Provide text-dependent questions to guide their viewing and conversations.

Writing station: Students might write about what they learned from viewing or listening at the above stations. They could also share this information with classmates in a community journal (a spiral notebook that the whole class shares) that others could add to.

Lessons That Last: Whole-Group Mini-Lesson Plan for Listening to Texts and Information Presented—Third Grade

Listen Closely

Focus: how to listen to texts or speakers or videos

Method to Maximize Student Engagement: interesting books, audio recordings or podcasts, videos, or live speakers to share that have information related to topics being studied in content areas and/or of interest to students

Model: how to listen carefully to information being presented and take notes to answer text-dependent questions or to clarify understanding; how to think more deeply while listening or viewing closely (by examining text through various lenses, such as the words, illustrations, music, and so on)

Prompting for Independence:

- "Listen carefully to the gist of what the author/speaker is telling us. What is the main idea? What are the key details?"
- "Pay attention to repeated words the author/speaker uses. What do these words tell us about the message the author/speaker is communicating?"
- "Think about how the speaker/author organized the information."
- "Ask yourself (or each other) questions. What did you understand? What was confusing? Listen again and talk with each other to answer those questions."
- "When listening, listen to how the reader/speaker used her voice to tell important parts."
- "When viewing, notice the illustrations or images that were used. Why do you think the illustrator/videographer included them? What did you learn from the illustrations or images?"
- "When viewing, listen to any music used. Describe the music. Why do you think the videographer used that music?"

Lessons That Last: Whole-Group Mini-Lesson Plan for Listening to Texts and Information Presented—Third Grade *(continued)*

Mini-Lesson Procedure:

1. Choose the text, audio, video, or speaker carefully. Select something *short*, so students will be able to focus and take something of *depth* from this experience. Be sure the material is at least on grade level or a bit above and will *add* to students' knowledge of topics. (I used an online video about dinosaurs from the American Museum of Natural History at www.amnh.org.)
2. Tell the class you will be viewing (or listening to) something you think they'll find interesting. Relate it to something you've been studying. For example, say, "We are learning about types of organisms that lived long ago and about the nature of their environments. When the environment changes, some organisms survive and reproduce or move to other locations, or even die. The video we'll watch today is about dinosaurs and is produced by the American Museum of Natural History." Don't tell them too much about the topic, because you want them to listen and pay close attention to the video.
3. Show them the short video. (The trailer I've used, "Dinosaurs Explained," is a minute and twenty-three seconds in length.) Before they view, ask them to just listen and watch and see if they can figure out the gist of the video. After watching, have students turn and talk to a partner about the key ideas they took from listening. Then have a few students share with the whole class.
4. Now ask them to watch (or listen again). This time have them pay attention to the words being said. Have them listen for repeated words, words they think are important, or words they didn't understand. You might give them clipboards to jot down their thinking and may need to model how to do it. Again, have them talk with partners and then share with the group.
5. Finally, have them watch (or listen) one more time and pay attention to the music (or the illustrations). Ask, "How would you describe the music? Why do you think the videographer used this music?" Be sure to let them talk with partners and share with the class.
6. After they've viewed (or listened) several times, have them answer text-dependent questions about the information. Then have them summarize what they learned.

On-the-Spot Assessment: Were students able to pay attention to the particular aspects you asked them to tune in to (such as words, music, or illustrations)? What did you notice about their understanding of the topic? Did it deepen with increased opportunities to listen? Did partners take turns speaking and listening to each other?

Connections to Whole-Group Mini-Lesson

Independent Reading Connection: You might have students choose related informational texts to read independently following the above lesson. Ask them to make connections with the information they listened to or viewed. They might engage in reading the information several times to take deeper meaning from it.

Small-Group Connection: For students who need extra support in listening and/or viewing, occasionally teach lessons like the one from whole group with just them. Help them engage in a collaborative conversation with each other about what they learned.

Writing Connection: Model how to take notes while viewing. Create viewing guides, as needed, to help students pay attention to particular things while listening or viewing. (A sample is provided in Figure 9.3.) Kids might also use these notes to summarize what they learned orally and/or in writing.

Evaluation: Use a rubric like the one in Figure 9.4. Take notes in the spaces provided. Don't just check *yes* or *no*.

Figure 9.3 Sample Viewing Guide for Video

| | |
|--|---------------|
| _____ | _____ |
| (student name) | (video title) |
| 1. Gist: I think a key idea from the video is _____ | |
| _____ | |
| 2. Words: Important words, repeated words, new words are _____ | |
| _____ | |
| 3. Illustrations or images: From looking at the images I learned _____ | |
| _____ | |
| I think the videographer included these images to _____ | |
| _____ | |
| 4. Music: This music sounded _____ | |
| I think the videographer used this music to _____ | |
| _____ | |

Figure 9.4 Sample Rubric for Listening to Texts and Information Presented

| | Yes | Somewhat | No |
|---|-----|----------|----|
| Content: Student listened and determined the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information viewed. | | | |
| Attentiveness: Student faced the speaker, made eye contact, and focused attention. | | | |
| Communication: Student stayed on topic and added to the conversation. | | | |
| Critical listening: Student got deeper meaning from close viewing or close listening and elaborated on ideas. | | | |

Team Planning Tool: Listening to and Following Spoken Directions—Kindergarten

Note: This lesson can easily be adapted for students in other grade levels by expanding the number of directions given at a time, in order. For example, in first or second grade, use three- or four-step spoken directions, depending on your state's standards and students' needs and skill levels.

Standard We're Teaching **Kindergarten:** Follow oral directions that involve a short related sequence of actions.

Academic Vocabulary We'll Use and Expect to Hear

- *follow directions*
- *in order*
- *in sequence*

Team Planning Tool: Listening to and Following Spoken Directions—Kindergarten *(continued)*

Whole-Group Ideas

- Play listening games, such as Simon Says. Give children oral directions, one or two steps at a time. For example, “Clap twice, then touch your head” or “Point to your eyes, then touch your toes.”
- Give students materials and then give oral directions for making something simple. Give one or two directions at a time. For example, “Glue a red heart in the middle of your paper.” (After students do this, give the next direction/s.) “Now glue a small pink heart onto the red heart. Next, glue the tiny white heart onto the pink heart. Decorate the rest of the paper however you wish.”

Partner Practice at Literacy Work Stations

Listening station: Students listen to a recording of step-by-step instructions. Give one- or two-step directions at a time. Then pause and give children time to do that before recording the next direction (or two). You can record physical movements for them to follow. Or the directions could be an art-type project. Students could also give their partner directions to follow, step by step.

Lessons That Last: Whole-Group Mini-Lesson Plan for Listening to and Following Spoken Directions—Kindergarten

Listening Games

Focus: listening to follow one- or two-step directions

Method to Maximize Student Engagement: read-aloud books about listening to directions; active movement games, like Simon Says, or giving directions (one or two at a time) to make something

Model: how to actively listen by focusing eyes on the speaker and not talking while directions are being given

Prompting for Independence:

- “Listen carefully. I will give you directions and then you will follow them.”
- “Look at the speaker and be ready to listen. I will give you two directions at a time. Think about doing one thing and then the next. Picture what you will do in order. Ready?”

Mini-Lesson Procedure:

1. Gather the class on the carpet and tell them they’ll be learning how to listen and follow directions. Read aloud a book about listening, such as *Listen Buddy* by Helen Lester (1997). Discuss the importance of learning to listen. Talk about what it means to listen actively. You might make an anchor chart with students on being a good listener. Remind them to listen with their ears, eyes, and brains.
2. Play a listening game, such as Simon Says. Have the class stand. Start by giving one-step and then two-step directions. Tell them to do the actions only if you say “Simon Says.” If they don’t follow directions, they’ll be out and have to sit down. The object of the game is to follow directions and stay standing.
3. For example give one-step directions such as, “Simon says touch your nose. Simon says rub your belly. Simon says jump two times. Now jump just one time.” If students jump when you didn’t say “Simon Says,” they must sit down.
4. Continue playing the game, varying directions as you go. Be sure to sometimes give two-step directions, such as, “Simon says touch your shoulders and then touch your toes.” Other ideas: blink your eyes three times; clap twice; clasp your hands in front of you; shrug your shoulders; touch your elbows; flap your arms like a bird four times; reach for the sky; squat down low; wiggle your nose; make the sound of the letter *b*; march in place one-two-three; bend to the left; raise your right foot.

5. On other days, give one- and two-step directions orally that instruct students to make drawings or build things. For example, give kids paper and crayons. Then give directions such as the following:
- Draw a big, blue circle in the middle of your paper.
 - Write your name inside the circle. Use a green crayon.
 - Draw stripes inside the circle. Use a yellow crayon.
 - Draw a black string hanging from the bottom of the circle. Pretend this is a balloon and draw someone holding on to it.

On-the-Spot Assessment: Pay attention to who is listening and following one-step directions. Who is following two-step directions?

Connections to Whole-Group Mini-Lesson

Independent Reading Connection: Children who struggle with reading or learning English will benefit from time spent listening to recorded texts. Periodically, you might allow these students to listen to recorded books during independent time. You might record some books about listening such as those in the mentor text list.

Small-Group Connection: Have children who have trouble following directions work on this in small group. Try some of the same types of activities from whole group with children who need support. Review habits of active listening and then work with them to build their attention for directions. Keep the directions simple; try to help kids visualize what they are supposed to do before they attempt to do two-step procedures.

Writing Connection: Teach children how to write simple one- and two-step directions. They can then try to read and follow one another's directions.

Evaluation: Keep a simple checklist noting who can follow one-step or two-step oral directions.

Mentor Texts for Modeling: Listening to Texts and Following Spoken Directions

- *Listen Buddy* by Helen Lester
- *Press Here* by Herve Tullet
- *Tap the Magic Tree* by Christie Matheson
- *Touch the Brightest Star* by Christie Matheson
- *Tap to Play* by Salina Yoon
- *Telephone* by Mac Barnett
- *Pass It On* by Marilyn Sadler

Mentor Videos for Modeling:

- "Dinosaurs Explained" (Trailer), 1:23, from www.amnh.org and found on amnh.tv. 2012. (Series of

short videos on dinosaurs and other topics.)

- "The History of Gargoyles," 3:48, from www.watchknowlearn.org (from Meet Me at the Corner Virtual Field Trips).
- "Waterfalls," 2:23, from www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/waterfalls.htm (information about visiting Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, particularly about waterfalls and safety).
- "Hummingbirds," 2:05, from <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/hummingbirds> (interesting information about this incredible bird).

Note: You might search YouTube videos for clips to share with your students.

Teaching Tips for Listening Across the Grades

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| In Pre-K and Kindergarten | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind children of the habits of being a good listener during read-aloud time (and throughout the school day). • Provide opportunities for children to listen to recorded books at a listening station, too. These can be used for listening comprehension and vocabulary development. • Giving a child a microphone, even if it's a toy from a dollar store, can help him project his voice, which, in turn, can help other students to listen. |
|---------------------------|--|

Teaching Tips for Listening Across the Grades *(continued)*

In Grades One–Two

- Continue reading aloud to students across the grades daily. Think aloud and ask questions to help students develop strong listening comprehension. This will provide a foundation for their reading comprehension, over time.
- Have students listen to stories and informational texts multiple times for different purposes to help them think more deeply about these texts (as part of whole group and at a listening station).
- Teach children how to view videos and listen for important ideas and words used.

In Grades Three and Up

- Note taking is an important skill for intermediate students to learn. It will help them be active listeners and pay attention to what's most important.
- Using recorded information such as videos and/or inviting speakers to your classroom can set the stage for having real purposes for listening.
- Having students work in literature discussion groups also provides authentic opportunities for kids to listen to one another. This is a great place for them to learn to take turns respectfully, how to share the floor, and how to build on others' ideas during discussion.

Sample Anchor Charts for Listening

This anchor chart promotes listening closely to read-alouds and media.



This anchor chart focuses on listening to directions.

Literacy Work Stations for Listening

Students listen to recorded directions to make something, such as a Valentine's Day project.



Two kids share a portable listening station by using a splitter for the headsets. They talk about the information after listening, using the prompts at this station.



Kids at this listening station use a listening guide as they listen to informational text. They talk and/or write together after listening.



This listening station takes minimal classroom space. Headphones hang on Command-brand hooks on the wall under a dry erase board. Kids sit on the floor to listen here.

Using Correct Grammar and Parts of Speech

When I visit primary classrooms, I am delighted to see students reading and writing independently. As mentioned in the above sections, I think it's also important to have students engaged in speaking and listening (as well as reading and writing) at work stations, especially children who are second language learners or those who have low oral language skills. But what about grammar? Where does it fit in?

In examining kindergarten through grade two state standards closely, I've noticed that the verb in most of the grammar-related standards is *use*. In third grade, I notice the words *explain the function* added. For example, the Common Core State Standards for first grade say that children should *use* common, proper, and possessive nouns *when writing or speaking*. They should *use* verbs to convey a sense of past, present, and future. Likewise, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards say that second graders should *use* and *understand* the function of verbs, nouns, and adjectives *in the context of reading, writing, and speaking*. The Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) for kindergarten say that the student will *use* words to describe/name people, places, and *use* words to describe/name actions. However, I often see kids doing worksheets

and activities where they are *identifying*, not really *using* parts of speech. It's important to focus on teaching ideas that truly help youngsters *use* nouns, verbs, adjectives, and pronouns while speaking and writing.

Grammar begins with oral language. Again, speaking is foundational. How do young children learn Standard English grammar and usage? By listening to others who *use* Standard English and grammar as they speak. Over time, children who *speak* with Standard English grammar are more likely to *write* using the same. Begin by listening carefully to how your students speak in everyday situations at school, and scaffold them in using standard grammar in their speech.

You don't have to correct or embarrass the child, but kindly restate using Standard English what the child has said. For example, when children say things like, "They is going to lunch" or "She done good on that," you'd simply repeat, "Yes. *They are* going to lunch" or "I agree. She *did well* on that." Have children repeat the way you said it and remind them that that's how we say it at school (or in Standard English). Oral language is the foundation. We can't just teach grammar in isolation.

When teaching about parts of speech more formally, introduce students to the idea that we can give names to different types of words to help us *use words* when we're writing. Make anchor charts with your

class over time that focus on nouns or verbs or adjectives. Then display the charts side by side on a classroom wall with the label of “Writers Use Different Parts of Speech.” (See photos on page 265 in this section.) Refer to the charts while teaching children how to use these special types of words.

We can also look at how authors use different kinds of words to make their writing clear to us as readers. Help children understand why we learn the names of these different kinds of words. Specifically, when we have *language* to name the parts of speech, it’s easier to discuss how to improve our writing. For example, you might tell students, “Using a *proper noun* to name your character makes him come to life and helps the reader/listener know exactly whom you’re describing.” Or “It’s important to include a *noun* in every sentence; it helps the listener/reader know *who* or *what* you’re talking about.”

Likewise, when revising writing, verbs make a piece more vivid. Tell kids, “A stronger *verb* will help the reader visualize the action here. Did the character *say, shout, whisper, or screech* those words?” Or “You’ve used the same *verb* in every sentence in this section. Let’s try another *verb* to show the action. Instead of saying a bee *goes*, we can say a bee *flies, travels, or zooms*.”

And “*Adjectives* add details. You can use them to paint a clear picture. Tell about that boy using *adjectives*. Is he *tall, cheerful, silly, athletic, and/or shy*? To make this work on parts of speech meaningful, use familiar favorite books that you’ve read aloud to your class many times. The teaching example below uses nouns, one of the first parts of speech with which we acquaint our students. It’s important for them to understand nouns well, since they are foundational to speaking, reading, and writing (because they name people, places, objects, and events).

Here’s how I used literature to help students *use* nouns. One of my favorite authors is Kevin Henkes. His books are written with clear language and tell stories kids love. After reading aloud *Old Bear* (2008) to a first-grade class, we returned to it at a later date as a mentor text to examine how writers use different kinds of words. I began by placing the book under a document camera, so kids could see the words and pictures while I reread it. I began the lesson by telling the class (and pointing to our anchor chart on nouns), “Today let’s look at how Kevin Henkes uses nouns to write his story. He uses many interesting nouns to name things.

Let’s read the title. Whom did he name? Who’s the main character? Please use a sentence. Yes, the main character is Old Bear. See how Kevin Henkes names the bear. He doesn’t just call the main character *bear*. Why do you think he did that?”

I began reading the book but didn’t pause at every noun. (That would destroy the story!) Instead, I selectively asked kids to think about nouns, or people, places, or things that Kevin Henkes included in the illustrations *and* the words. For example, on the first page, this author writes, “By the time Old Bear fell asleep for the winter, it was snowing hard.” I had children turn and talk and name any nouns that the author used in the picture and the words. Their responses were, “Kevin Henkes drew Old Bear in the middle of the page and used the words *Old Bear*.” I then asked if they noticed anything about those words, and they said the words had capital letters. We talked about how names of characters are nouns and are capitalized. We added that information to the anchor chart. I told them these are special nouns called *proper nouns*. I simply exposed them to this academic vocabulary. My goal wasn’t for them to identify *proper nouns*, but instead was to let them know that these kinds of words are special nouns that should have capital letters.

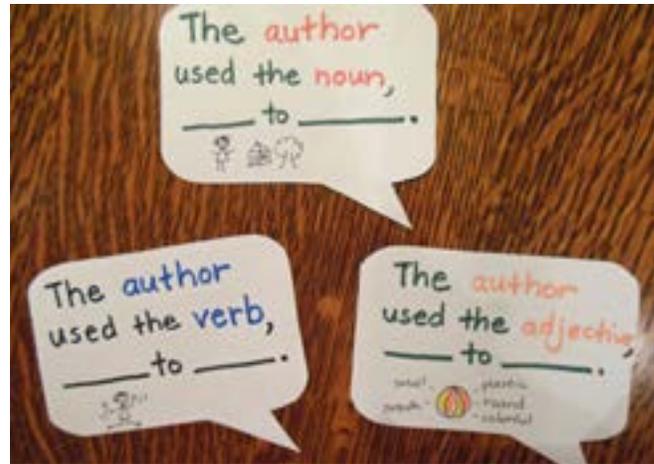
I continued to read several pages and stopped on the page that said, “He dreamed that spring had come and he was a cub again.” Again kids looked at the illustration and the words and noticed that the bear was in the middle of the page again, but this time he wasn’t old. He was little. “That’s because the bear is the main character, so he’s in the middle,” one child told the class about the illustration. Another noticed the word *cub*. “Kevin Henkes didn’t call the bear a bear this time. Now he used the word *cub*.” This gave us the opportunity to see how the author uses different nouns to tell about the bear—he calls this character *Old Bear* and then refers to him as *cub*. I was able to help children see that the author deliberately uses different names to show how the character changes throughout the story.

On the next page (with prompting), children noticed that the words *flower* and *crocus* name the same thing, too. We figured out that Kevin Henkes sometimes uses two different nouns to name the same thing on one page to make his story more interesting. Kids noticed that the only noun with capital letters is *Old*

Bear, which is used several times in the story. We also talked about how the author doesn't call Old Bear by his name on every page. Many times Kevin Henkes uses the words *he* or *him* instead of *Old Bear*. I showed them how boring it would sound if the author kept saying *Old Bear* on every page. For example, "How would it sound if Kevin had written, 'And when Old Bear walked out into the beautiful spring day, it took Old Bear a minute to realize that Old Bear wasn't dreaming?'"

In subsequent lessons on how authors use nouns, I included a simple conversation card that read, "The author uses the *noun* _____ to _____" to help students incorporate this academic vocabulary. As we studied verbs or adjectives, we used similar conversation cards for those parts of speech. We used the cards often as we examined how authors crafted stories and informational texts. This work takes kids beyond just identifying parts of speech into understanding why and how these parts of speech are useful to writers and readers.

Over time, these conversation cards and the books we'd been reading were placed in a grammar station, and I was delighted to hear partners talking about parts of speech and how authors use them in their writing. We also added conversation cards to the writing station as children examined their own writing and talked about how a *strong verb* would show more action or a different *noun* would make their writing sound more interesting.



These conversation cards for parts of speech were used during whole-group discussions. They were then used by kids at a grammar station as well as the writing station (below) to discuss how authors used specific words in their writing.



Sifting Through the Standard: Using Correct Grammar and Parts of Speech

What It Is

Grammar is a set of rules that explains how words are used in a language.

- Grammar includes labels for different kinds of words, or parts of speech (for example, nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, determiners/articles, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions), why we use different parts of speech, and how they all work together.
- Grammar also refers to different kinds of sentences, such as simple, compound, declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory.

Why It's Important

- Learning all the grammar rules and labels for parts of speech and kinds of sentences should not be our goal with primary students.
- It's important to know what a noun, verb, or adjective is so that you can use that vocabulary when talking about student writing and how to improve it. For example, "Using stronger verbs will help the reader visualize the action in your story." Or "Let's look at describing words. Adjectives help readers paint a picture."
- I recommend that you not talk about parts of speech as you are reading a book, unless you're using that book to show how an author uses different kinds of words.
- Teach about grammar when kids are speaking and writing.

Sifting Through the Standard: Using Correct Grammar and Parts of Speech *(continued)*

Student Prerequisites

It's important to begin teaching grammar in the context of oral language. If kids can't speak with Standard English grammar, they will have difficulty writing with standard grammar. (If a child says, "That boy like to mess with other kids," he or she will write it the same way.)

Academic Vocabulary

Kindergarten:

- *nouns*
- *words to describe/name people, places, and things*
- *verbs*
- *words to describe/name actions*
- *descriptive words/words to describe*
- *complete sentences*
- *question words*

First grade:

- *different kinds of nouns* (common, proper, singular, plural)
- *past, present, and future verbs*
- *adjectives*
- *pronouns*
- *prepositions*

Second grade:

- *adverbs*
- *declarative and interrogative sentences*

Third grade:

- *grammar*
- *subject*
- *verb*
- *conjunctions*
- *simple sentence*
- *compound sentence*
- *complex sentence*

Real-World Connections

- Most children don't truly understand grammar to any depth and complexity until about middle school. That's when I could remember the rules of grammar and learn about things like direct objects, dependent and independent clauses, and the like.
- Primary children should learn to speak using standard subject-verb agreement, not just learn to identify it.
- The emphasis should be on helping children use labels for different kinds of words (parts of speech) when talking about writing.

Example Test Questions

- "Read this dictionary entry. In the sentence above, the word ____ is
 - a. a noun
 - b. a verb
 - c. an adjective
 - d. an adverb"
- "What is the correct way to write sentences 6 and 7?"
- "How should sentence 12 be changed?"
- "What change, if any, needs to be made to sentence 15?"
- "Use correct grammar when writing." (This is often part of the directions for writing compositions on state tests.)

Team Planning Tool: Using Correct Grammar and Parts of Speech—First Grade

Note: The following lesson focuses on verbs, but it could be varied to focus on nouns or adjectives or a different part of speech. Teach similar lessons to help kids look at how authors use particular parts of speech. Start with just one part of speech at a time.

Standard We're Teaching

First grade: Students are expected to understand and use the following parts of speech in the context of reading, writing, and speaking: verbs (past, present, and future).

Academic Vocabulary We'll Use and Expect to Hear

- *verbs*
- *words that express actions*
- *illustrations*
- *author*

Whole-Group Ideas

- Read aloud and return to mentor texts (fiction and nonfiction) with well-chosen verbs to build vocabulary as well as guide students to look at how authors use verbs in books.
- Provide highlighter tape for kids to mark some of the verbs and talk about why the author chose those words.

Partner Practice at Literacy Work Stations

Author study (or topic) station: Partners read and examine familiar books written by an author whose work you've been studying, such as Kevin Henkes, or about a topic of study (like animals and how they live). Provide highlighter tape and conversation cards, so they can look at the books and find different kinds of words (for example, verbs) and talk about why the author chose those words. Include a community journal or a display board where students can record and share what they learned. They might use an iPad to record their conversation.

Writing station: Students work together on their own writing to look for verbs and how they've used them. They look at one piece of writing together and talk about how to use verbs to express action. They also add action to their illustrations, using mentor texts as models.

Lessons That Last: Whole-Group Mini-Lesson Plan for Using Correct Grammar and Parts of Speech—First Grade

Looking for Verbs

Focus: how authors use different kinds of words (specifically, verbs to make their writing interesting)

Method to Maximize Student Engagement: engaging text with a variety of verbs and high-quality illustrations; highlighter tape (for marking verbs); anchor chart

Model: how to think about author's word choice; how to look at words and pictures and how the verbs and illustrations match; thinking about how the author's choice of verbs expresses action

Prompting for Independence:

- "Let's look for some words that express action on this page. What do you picture happening? Why do you think the author used that verb?"
- "What do you notice about how the author used verbs on this page?"
- "What actions are shown in the illustration and the words on this page?"
- "Do any of the verbs on this page relate to the same thing? The author did that to make the writing interesting."

Lessons That Last: Whole-Group Mini-Lesson Plan for Using Correct Grammar and Parts of Speech—First Grade *(continued)*

Mini-Lesson Procedure:

1. Choose a high-quality read-aloud with illustrations that match the pictures well, such as *Feeding Time* (a DK Level 1 Reader) by Lee Davis (2001). Be sure to have read it aloud previously when looking at word choice or grammar, as in this lesson. (When teaching about grammar, I find it helpful to pick books with complete sentences written in Standard English to start. I also look for books that have sentences that begin and end on one page. I chose to use an informational text in this lesson, but plan to teach similar lessons with fiction.)
2. Make an anchor chart about verbs with the students. Keep it simple. (See samples in this section.) Don't put too many words on it. Display it nearby, so you can refer to it during the mini-lesson.
3. Look at the cover with the class and read the title together. Briefly show a few pages from the book. Ask kids about the actions that might take place in this book. What will the *topic* be? (African animals eating.) What are some of the verbs they might find? Tell them we'll pay attention to the verbs the author uses to tell how these animals eat.
4. Read the book together, one page at a time, having students think about the words the author uses to express action. Ask kids to take turns marking the verbs with highlighter tape.
5. Then have them turn and talk about what they notice about the verbs. "How do the verbs express action? What do the verbs help us learn about these animals?" (For example, elephants *wrap* and *curl* their trunks around their food. They *snap* branches from a tree and *chew* the bark.) "How did the verbs make the writing more interesting?"
6. Repeat this work with several pages. Have kids find interesting verbs; don't worry about them identifying every verb. Instead, focus on how the author *uses verbs* to paint a picture.
7. During writing workshop, have students look at a piece of writing with a partner to look at how they've used verbs to express action. Have them highlight some of their verbs. Ask them to help each other use verbs to add interest to their writing. Be sure to have some students share how they changed their writing to improve it.

On-the-Spot Assessment: Were the children able to find verbs that expressed action? What kind of thinking were they able to do about how the author used verbs in the text? Are they learning to think more deeply about author's word choice and the text's meaning? Does their oral language reflect standard usage of verbs as they talk about the book?

Connections to Whole-Group Mini-Lesson

Independent Reading Connection: During independent reading time, ask students if they noticed anything about how the authors of their books used verbs today. Have them share with a partner or the class.

Small-Group Connection: As you talk with students about what they read in small group, you might talk with them about how an author uses verbs in a piece of writing. Don't dwell on parts of speech, but occasionally use a discussion of these kinds of words to help deepen the meaning of a story.

Writing Connection: This is the most important connection to whole group when it comes to grammar. Be sure to give students opportunities to peer conference and look at how they're using verbs in their own writing. They can highlight verbs, evaluate their use of verbs, and strive to add a few more interesting verbs on a page of writing.

Evaluation: Are students using correct forms of verbs in their speaking and writing? Are they able to vary the verbs they use as they speak and write? Are they starting to understand how authors use verbs in their writing?

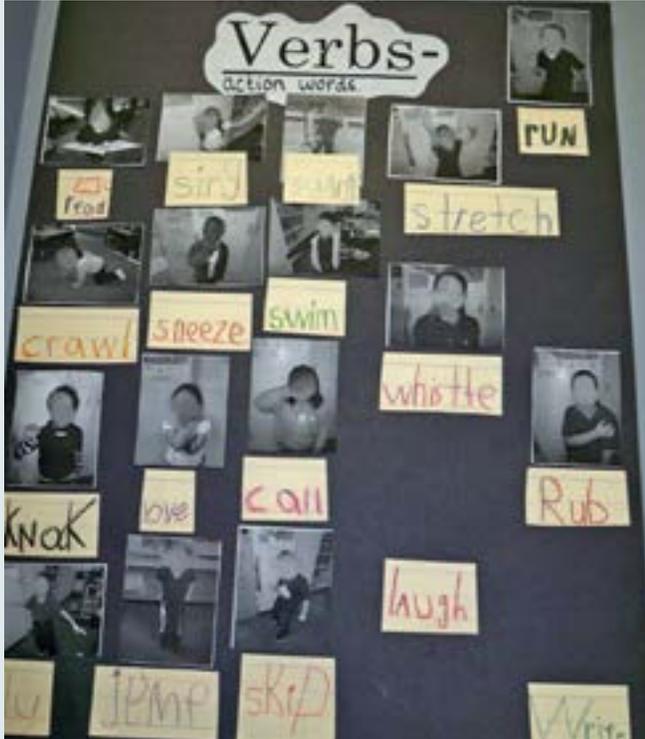
Mentor Texts for Modeling: Using Correct Grammar and Parts of Speech

- ⦿ *Old Bear* by Kevin Henkes
- ⦿ *Feeding Time* by Lee Davis
- ⦿ *Nouns and Verbs Have a Field Day* by Robin Pulver
- ⦿ *If You Were a Noun . . .* series by Michael Dahl
- ⦿ *A Mink a Fink a Skating Rink . . .* series by Brian Cleary
- ⦿ *Things That Are Most in the World* by Judi Barrett
- ⦿ *Merry-Go-Round: A Book About Nouns* series by Ruth Heller
- ⦿ *A Is for Angry: An Animal Adjective Alphabet* by Sandra Boynton

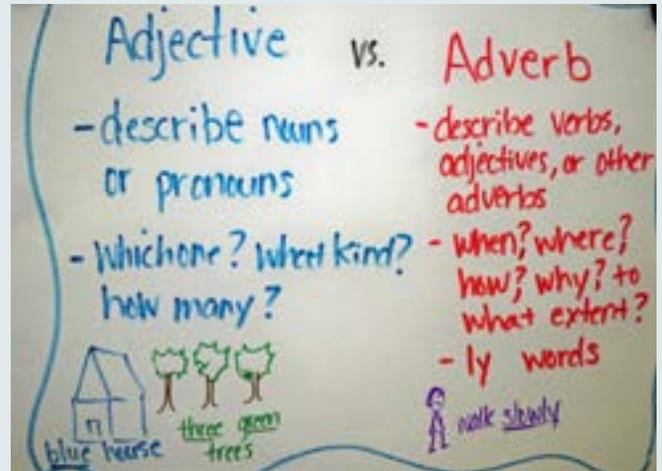
Teaching Tips for Using Correct Grammar and Parts of Speech Across the Grades

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| In Pre-K and Kindergarten | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lay the foundation for grammar by paying attention to kids' oral language. Insist that they speak in sentences. Scaffold their language to help them use correct subject-verb agreement. If children use non-Standard English, have them repeat the "school way" of talking after you. • The emphasis should be on <i>using</i> parts of speech, not simply identifying nouns and verbs. • Note that in kindergarten children should learn how to <i>orally</i> form regular plural nouns by adding /s/ or /es/. (This is not a spelling skill at these grade levels.) Have students also pay attention to the s sound at the end of words when they are reading to "make it sound right." |
| In Grades One–Two | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most important thing is not that young children can identify personal, possessive, and indefinite pronouns. (Yikes!) It's critical that they begin <i>using</i> pronouns correctly in both their speech and their writing. For example, if a child says, "Him go to the store," restate it as "He goes to the store. That's how we say it in English [or at school]." If children can't say it, they won't write it correctly. This will take lots of practice for some students, especially English language learners. The practice is best done orally, not on worksheets. • At these grade levels, help children <i>expand</i> sentences to include more complex structures orally. If a child says, "The girl is happy," ask "Why is she happy?" Then help the student repeat the whole thing: "The girl is happy because she is going to a birthday party after school." When children learn to talk this way, it will be reflected in their writing (with prompting). |
| In Grades Three and Up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the age range at which children can think more abstractly and probably better grasp the idea of what nouns, verbs, and adjectives actually are. (Remember that these labels for words are rather abstract.) If the foundation has been laid well in pre-K through grade two, children will be familiar with the idea that there are different kinds of words that can be labeled. We use those labels (<i>pronoun, conjunction, preposition</i>) to help us talk about our writing. • It's still important to help kids develop correct English usage in their speaking first. If you see issues with usage in children's writing, listen to how they talk. Scaffold their oral language, much as we did in pre-K and kindergarten. • Again, the expectation isn't that students can diagram sentences and name every part of speech. Rather, they are gaining understanding that different kinds of words are used in language for different purposes and that they can use those terms (especially <i>nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns</i> in third grade) when talking about writing. |

Sample Anchor Charts for Using Correct Grammar and Parts of Speech



This anchor chart for verbs was developed over several lessons. Kids thought of actions and dramatized them; then the teacher added their photos and corresponding verbs to the chart, a few at a time.

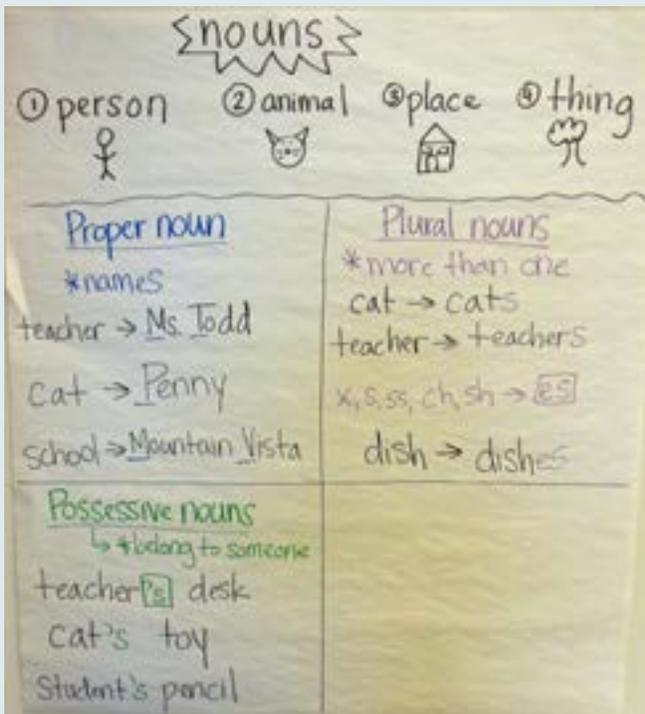


Adjectives and adverbs are the subject of this anchor chart made over time with intermediate students.

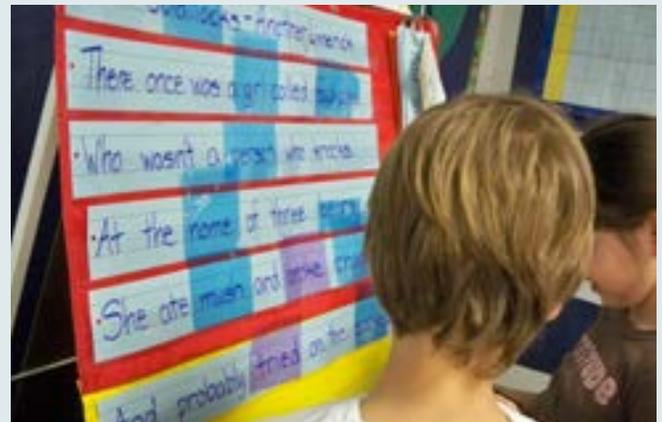
Literacy Work Stations for Using Correct Grammar and Parts of Speech



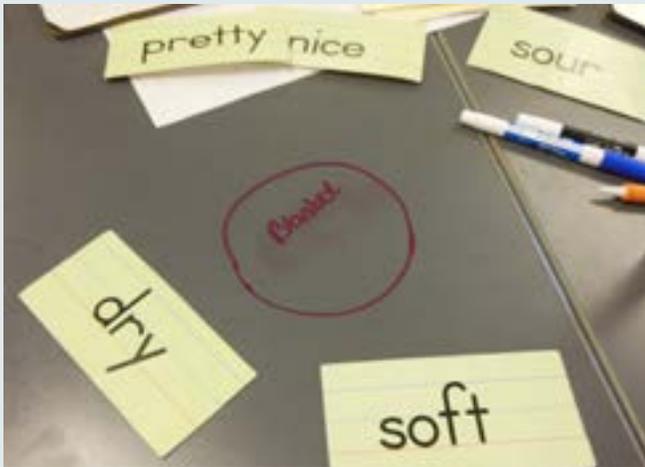
Kindergartners sort pictures of people, places, and things. Then they use a conversation card to name the picture. They can tell sentences using the picture and record it using technology. They can also write about the pictures, using nouns.



Another class made this anchor chart for nouns. Kids added sticky notes of nouns found in books read aloud or at stations.



Pairs of students highlight nouns in one color and verbs in another at this poetry station. Vary the work by having kids identify and discuss how the poet used *singular nouns*, *possessive nouns*, or *pronouns*. Conversation cards can support their talk.



Kids choose several adjective cards and make a circle map by writing a noun in the middle that goes with them. They can also make circle maps with nouns and adjectives from books they're reading. The same work can be done by intermediate readers with verbs and adverbs.



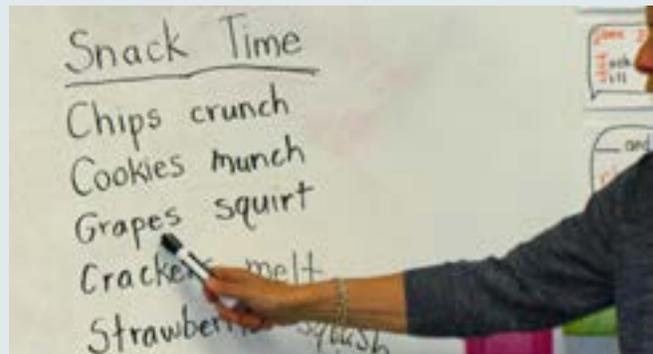
Students draw pictures of themselves or others and write adjectives to describe that person. These are displayed with the heading "Who Am I?" Kids could also write riddles about people, places, things, or events (nouns) on paper folded in half like a card. They write the clues (verbs, adjectives) on the front of the card and draw a picture with a noun label on the inside. Others can read the riddles.



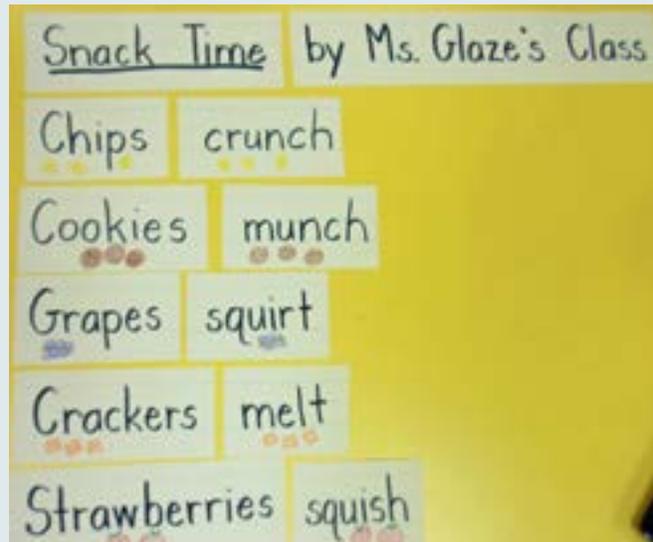
Here's one of the riddle cards made by second graders.



Students highlight interesting verbs in news articles. (Laminate articles so they can be reused.) Then they talk about the author's choice of verbs. Add conversation cards here. Also have kids write their own news items and consider verb choice.



In whole group, we did shared writing of a very simple poem using a noun-verb pattern. I didn't call these words *nouns* and *verbs*. We just named familiar snacks and then told the action that would take place when each was chewed. For example, *chips crunch* and *grapes squirt* (in your mouth).



I copied our poem onto sentence strips, added illustrations, and had kids put the poem back together at the poetry station. They also wrote their own poems at the writing station. Similar poems could be written with adjective-noun-verb patterns.

Expanding Vocabulary

Vocabulary begins with—you guessed it—oral language once again! Children use words in their speech that they have heard modeled by adults at home, in school, or in the media. Students who speak with more advanced language are most likely to use more sophisticated vocabulary in their writing, too.

Using advanced vocabulary as we talk with our students is an important way to expose kids to these bigger, more complex words. Reading aloud carefully selected text with rich vocabulary, helping students pay attention to the new words, and then scaffolding them to use those same words is one of the best approaches to helping kids develop vocabulary at school and at home. Couching new words in meaningful context is the way to help children remember vocabulary.

Bringing Words to Life (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan 2002) details how to choose vocabulary words from rich texts and introduce the words in kid-friendly ways so that students will own them and use them correctly. A key to helping students deeply understand and use rich vocabulary in their speaking, reading, and writing is to provide multiple exposures to those new words, often in rapid-fire ways. When kids can see the words, hear the words, say the words, act out the words, and use the words orally in multiple contexts, they will know those words at deep levels and enrich their vocabularies.

For example, before reading aloud *Scaredy Squirrel Makes a Friend* by Melanie Watt (2011) in whole group, I displayed the words *encountering*, *risk*, *impression*, *potential*, and *realizes* and told students to pay attention to those new words in the text. We decided to touch our ears if we heard one of those words in the story. When children heard two new words in the sentence “He’d rather be alone than *risk encountering* someone dangerous,” we took a minute to talk about what it meant. Students were able to substitute the synonym *try* for *risk* and *meeting* for *encountering*, which helped them begin to understand what these words meant. Instead of moving on, I had students work briefly with these words in the context of the story right then and there. “Pretend you’re Scaredy Squirrel. How does he feel about *encountering* a new person? Show how he might act if he did *encounter* someone new. Have you even *encountered* someone new or a new situation?

Tell how you felt when you *encountered* someone new. Did you take a *risk*? Use the words *encountered* or *risk* in your sentence.”

Then I continued to read the book aloud. After reading (don’t feel you have to complete the book in one sitting), we reviewed the new words, and I challenged children to summarize the story using the new vocabulary. Over the next few days, these vocabulary words were moved to independent practice. Students were encouraged to use them in their retellings and writing about *Scaredy Squirrel* during literacy work stations. It was exciting to hear kids using these words throughout the day, too. “Mrs. Diller, we took a *risk* when we were reading today. We chose a book that was a little harder. We *encountered* some new words and figured them out.” Likewise, I made sure to integrate these new words in other contexts, too. During social studies, we talked about how explorers took *risks* as they were traveling to new lands long ago. They *encountered* difficulties and challenges along the way.

Dale and O’Rourke (1986) described four levels of knowing words:

1. I never saw the word before.
2. I’ve heard of it, but I don’t know what it means.
3. I recognize it in context, and I can tell you what it’s related to.
4. I know the word well.

I’d take it one step further: along with knowing words well, it’s important for students to *use* the words. My goal is for children to move to the deepest level of understanding vocabulary and use words well. For instance, Marzano (2009) recommends the following steps for children to learn vocabulary:

1. Teacher provides a description, explanation, or example of the new word.
2. Kids restate this description or explanation in their own words. Or they give an example of their own.
3. Students make a picture or visual representation of the new term.
4. Engage students periodically in activities that help them deepen their understanding of the word.
5. Periodically have kids discuss these words with each other.
6. Have kids play games with the new vocabulary words periodically for review. (83)

Building on the work of vocabulary research by those mentioned earlier, I've included ideas in this section to help you think about instruction and connected literacy work stations that help students learn

words deeply and use them in a variety of meaningful contexts. Read on to learn how to help your children move beyond just looking up dictionary definitions or memorizing meanings and matching them to words.

Sifting Through the Standard: Expanding Vocabulary

What It Is

Vocabulary refers to the words (and phrases) we know and use to communicate with others. It includes the words we understand and have meanings for (Diller 2007). There are four kinds of vocabulary:

1. speaking (words we use in conversation)
2. listening (words we understand through hearing)
3. reading (words we decode and comprehend)
4. writing (words we can write to convey messages)

Why It's Important

- English language learners (ELLs) who experience slow vocabulary development are less able to comprehend text at grade level than their English-only peers (August et al. 2005).
- There is a strong relationship between vocabulary development and reading comprehension in monolingual students, too (Lonigan and Shanahan 2009).
- In today's schools, students need *academic vocabulary* to be successful on tests. But more importantly, vocabulary development is especially important for understanding content-area materials and higher-level text.

Student Prerequisites

- Children need to interact with each new word multiple times with periodic practice to retain those words. There is not a "magic number" of exposures to a word, so think "multiple times."
- Background knowledge helps kids learn new words. Seeing photos, examining real objects, and having kids act out new words can build their schema for new vocabulary.

Academic Vocabulary

Kindergarten:

- *meanings*
- *word*
- *unknown word*
- *clues*
- *picture dictionary*

First grade:

- *vocabulary*
- *phrase*
- *sentence*
- *root word*
- *category*
- *compound word*
- *alphabetize*

Second grade:

- *prefix*
- *suffix*
- *glossary*
- *multiple-meaning words*
- *synonym/similar*
- *antonym/opposite*

Sifting Through the Standard: Expanding Vocabulary *(continued)*

Academic Vocabulary

- Third grade:
- *affixes*
 - *homographs*
 - *homonyms*
 - *thesaurus*
 - *figurative language*

Real-World Connections

- Learning new words improves comprehension, not just of what's being read but of everyday life.
- People with more developed vocabularies are often viewed as being more intelligent and more capable than those with limited vocabularies.
- Every career field has its own special set of vocabulary to learn, so having a system by which to take on new words and their meanings is important throughout life.

Example Test Questions

- "Which words from paragraph 4 help you understand the meaning of _____?"
- "In paragraph 2, _____ means _____."
- "Read this dictionary entry. Which meaning most clearly matches the word _____ as it is used in paragraph 11?"
- "Which word is a synonym for _____ in paragraph 8?"
- "What is the meaning of the word _____ as used by the narrator in paragraph 2?"
- "Which detail from the text uses a word or phrase that also means _____?"
- "Which phrase helps the reader understand the meaning of _____?"

Note: Besides the fact that there are many questions specific to determining the meanings of words in context on a test, students need a solid grasp of *academic vocabulary* to understand what the test is asking.

Team Planning Tool: Expanding Vocabulary—Second Grade

Standards We're Teaching

Second grade: Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase; identify the real-life connections between words and their use (for example, describe foods that are *spicy* or *juicy*); distinguish between shades of meaning among closely related verbs (for example, *toss*, *throw*, *hurl*) and closely related adjectives (such as *thin*, *slender*, *skinny*, *scrawny*).

Academic Vocabulary We'll Use and Expect to Hear

- *unknown* word (or phrase)
- *clues*

Whole-Group Ideas

- Read aloud a story with Tier II vocabulary (words used by people with mature speech), such as *Tacky the Penguin* by Helen Lester (1998).
- Choose five to seven Tier II words and copy each one onto a plain index card. Later have kids illustrate and use them to retell the story. (I used *companions*, *clasped*, *in the distance*, *puzzled*, *chanting*, *graceful*, *hearty*.)
- Act out words with kids and connect them to real life (for example, *bracelet clasp*; *puzzled looks*; *graceful dancers*).

Partner Practice at Literacy Work Stations

Retelling station: Students work with a partner to retell a familiar story, using retelling pieces and vocabulary cards. They might also use a graphic organizer for beginning, middle, and end.

Listening station: Listen to a familiar recorded story and locate vocabulary words on cards. Act out those words when they are heard. After listening, use those words to discuss the story.

Lessons That Last: Whole-Group Mini-Lesson Plan for Expanding Vocabulary—Second Grade

Note: Also use informational text for the following type of lesson.

Vocabulary Card Retelling

Focus: to learn new vocabulary in the context of an engaging story; to also use vocabulary in retelling the story

Method to Maximize Student Engagement: read-aloud of an interesting story that contains rich vocabulary; students use body movement when they hear selected words read aloud; children act out new words in the context of the story; students create retelling pieces and use them to retell the story collectively

Model: how to think about new words and figure out their meanings from the context of the sentences in the story; how to connect new words to real life; how to determine shades of meaning (compare chanting to talking or singing or humming)

Prompting for Independence:

- “Who is your *companion*? Could a dog be a *companion*? Why? Could an apple be a *companion*? Why not?”
- “Listen to the sentence: _____. What do you think the word _____ means in this sentence? What’s another word, a synonym, we could try in its place?”
- “Think of a time you were *puzzled*. What made you feel *puzzled*? Show me a *puzzled* look. What does *puzzled* mean? Let’s try that word in the sentence instead of *puzzled*.”

Mini-Lesson Procedure:

1. Choose a book to read aloud that has rich vocabulary. Then pick five to seven words that you want your students to learn and use. Choose words that can be used in a variety of contexts or those with multiple meanings, if possible. The words should also be related to the big idea of the text.
2. Write each word on a 4-by-6-inch plain white index card in large black letters.
3. Gather students near you on the carpet. Show them the book you’ll read aloud, such as *Tacky the Penguin*. Tell them that you picked this book because it’s a great story and the author has used some amazing words you’d like them to learn, too.
4. Show the class the word cards, one at a time, and ask children to read the words with you. Help students look at parts of a word, if needed, to decode it. For example, if students have trouble decoding *companions*, cover up the rest of the word, showing just one syllable at a time, and then read the parts in order—*com/pan/ions*. Tell them to pay attention for that word in the book to figure out what it means.
5. Take a minute to give them some background knowledge on a few of the words. First, ask children if they know anything about this word and what it means. Then use the word multiple times. For example, “*This word is clasped. Say clasped with me. My bracelet has a clasp. A clasp is the part that holds my bracelet together. A clasp lets me take my jewelry off and on. Do any of you have a clasp on a bracelet or necklace? You can clasp your hands, like this. Everyone clasp your hands. What are you doing? Yes, we’re clasping our hands, or joining them together tightly.*” In less than a minute, you’ll find you can use the new word about ten times!
6. After you’ve briefly introduced each word, attach its word card to the board with magnets or tape, so the class can see it. Then come up with a signal, such as a thumbs-up, that you can all use if they hear one of the words read aloud.
7. Begin to read the book aloud, asking students to listen for the new words and think about what they mean. When you come to a new vocabulary word, pause and see whether students noticed it was one of the words. Then have them help figure out the word’s meaning from the context of the sentence and story. Talk about what would make sense. Is there another word, a synonym, that could be used in place of this word? For example, read, “There once lived a penguin. His home was a nice icy land he shared with his *companions*.” Stop and ask what *companions* might mean. Help students substitute the word *friends* in this sentence to figure out the word’s meaning. Have children act out a word (for example, *clasped, in the distance, puzzled*) if this will help them understand its meaning.

Lessons That Last: Whole-Group Mini-Lesson Plan for Expanding Vocabulary—Second Grade (continued)

8. After reading the book, ask children to take turns using one of the words to tell something about the story. For example, a student might say, "Graceful." Ask her to tell you about a place in the story where a character is graceful. She might reply, "The penguins were graceful at diving." Then have everyone show what it means to be a graceful diver. Ask, "Was Tacky a graceful diver?" A student might reply, "No. He did cannonballs." Use the word several times to help the meaning sink in more deeply.
9. At another time, have students help prepare materials for retelling. Assign a job to pairs or groups of three: have some use pencil and crayons to illustrate the meaning of each word on the word cards; have others create stick puppets of the characters for retelling; still others can create a backdrop showing the story's setting.
10. On another day, reread the book, starting with a quick review of the words. Post the now-illustrated word cards on the board, so students continue to pay attention to them. Tell children to listen carefully, because today they will use the new words to retell the story. As you read, invite students to dramatize or give a synonym for each of the new words.
11. After reading, invite students to take turns using the retelling pieces to retell a bit of the story. Have them take turns adding on to the story. Challenge them to use the new vocabulary words as they retell. Then tell them you'll put these materials in the drama station for them to continue using.

On-the-Spot Assessment: Do the students use the new words appropriately? Are they able to determine shades of meaning between similar words? Do their dramatizations accurately depict a word's meaning? Are they also using the new vocabulary in their speaking and/or writing?



Vocabulary words are written on cards, displayed on the board with magnets, and used during a read-aloud of *Tacky the Penguin*. We'd pause when we heard one of the words and think aloud and act out its meaning.



Kids illustrated vocabulary cards to make characters and setting pieces for retelling. Then students took turns retelling bits of *Tacky the Penguin* in front of the class, using the cards and retelling pieces. Later, these materials were placed at a retelling station.

Mentor Texts for Modeling: Expanding Vocabulary

- ⊙ *Scaredy Squirrel* by Melanie Watt
- ⊙ *Tacky the Penguin* by Helen Lester
- ⊙ *All the World* by Liz Garton Scanlon
- ⊙ Fancy Nancy series by Jane O'Connor
- ⊙ *The Junkyard Wonders* by Patricia Polacco
- ⊙ *Miss Alaineus* by Debra Frasier
- ⊙ *Glamourpuss* by Sarah Weeks
- ⊙ *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes
- ⊙ *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* by Philip Stead

Connections to Whole-Group Mini-Lesson

Independent Reading Connection: Encourage students to pay attention to new words as they read independently. Then invite them to tell something about their books using at least one of the new words they found. Many times, they'll start noticing the same words from read-aloud that are in their just-right books.

Small-Group Connection: Bring attention to several new words (no more than seven) you want children to pay attention to *before* they read by writing the words on cards. Choose words that are essential to the comprehension of the text. After reading, have students use these words to tell about what they read. You might have each student illustrate a word card to help deepen the meaning. These words could be placed with a copy of the guided-reading book to be used for retelling at a differentiated buddy-reading station for this group.

Writing Connection: Help students be thoughtful about their word choices as they write. Challenge them to use higher-level vocabulary like the authors of read-aloud books. Talk about how Helen Lester uses the word *companions* instead of *friends* and *chanted* rather than *said*. Discuss the shades of meaning.

Evaluation: Listen to students' retellings. Are they using the new vocabulary with greater ease and deeper understanding? Are children also using these new words beyond retelling—during class discussions or in their writing? It is only when we see evidence of students using new vocabulary that we know they truly own these words.

Teaching Tips for Expanding Vocabulary Across the Grades

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| In Pre-K and Kindergarten | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expose young children to higher-level vocabulary through read-aloud and other meaningful contexts in the classroom. Then scaffold them to use these words while speaking and retelling stories. • Encourage young children to ask about new words to expand their understanding of vocabulary. Then help them <i>use</i> these words, too. • Use picture sorts to help students develop vocabulary. Have children sort photos by meaning, not just by beginning sounds. For example, sort pictures of ways people move and then use words to describe those movements—<i>running, jumping, skipping, hopping, throwing</i>, and so on. |
| In Grades One–Two | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach children about shades of meaning of words by having them explore synonyms or related words in the context of reading and speaking about texts. For example, while reading the nonfiction book <i>Gravity</i> by Suzanne Lyons (2010), explore the following words related to motion: <i>force, push, bend, sway, presses, pull, tugs, orbits, travels</i>. Have kids act them out, illustrate them, and use them while speaking about what they are learning. • Engage students in word sorts where they categorize words by <i>meaning</i> and not just spelling patterns. They can search for words while reading familiar text that can be added to categories to expand their vocabulary. |
| In Grades Three and Up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regardless of which standards your state has adopted, there should be a huge emphasis on helping students identify real-life connections between words and their use. For example, when learning about weather <i>conditions</i> in science, relate them to local weather <i>hazards</i> and <i>impacts</i>. (For example, “The recent blizzard <i>conditions impacted</i> our community by shutting down public transportation like buses and trains. There were <i>hazards</i>, such as icy roads and power outages, that affected many of us.”) • Don't just do isolated work with prefixes and suffixes. Put the emphasis on learning what these affixes mean by creating simple anchor charts. Then have students find examples of words with these affixes in their reading and use them in their writing of “authentic” texts. |

Sample Anchor Charts for Expanding Vocabulary



To accompany a read-aloud to develop high-level (or Tier II) vocabulary, the teacher creates an anchor chart with the class of five to seven new words from a book. Picture support helps kids remember the meanings of the new words. The teacher then encourages students to use the words in their speaking, reading, and writing. This example is from a kindergarten class, using the book *Max Takes the Train* by Rosemary Wells. Repeat this activity with a new book every week and display the charts to remind students to use some of these words in their retellings of these books.



Anchor charts might also be made for content-area vocabulary. Instead of placing these words in alphabetical order on the word wall, create a chart with essential vocabulary that corresponds with a science or social studies topic. Kids can help illustrate the words. Display on a content area wall.

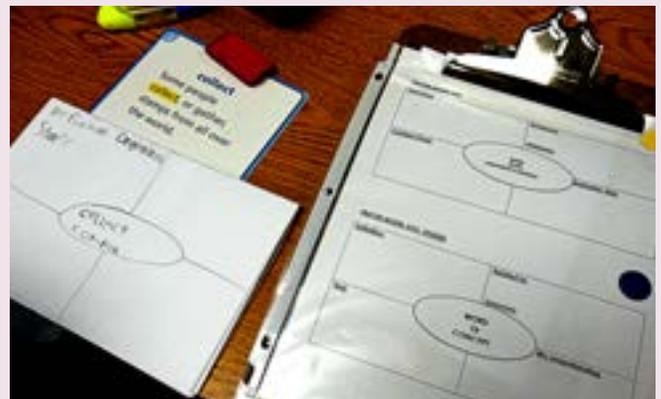
Literacy Work Stations for Expanding Vocabulary



Three students work together to retell *Tacky the Penguin* with student-made characters and settings at this retelling station. They use the vocabulary cards as they retell the story with the book as support.



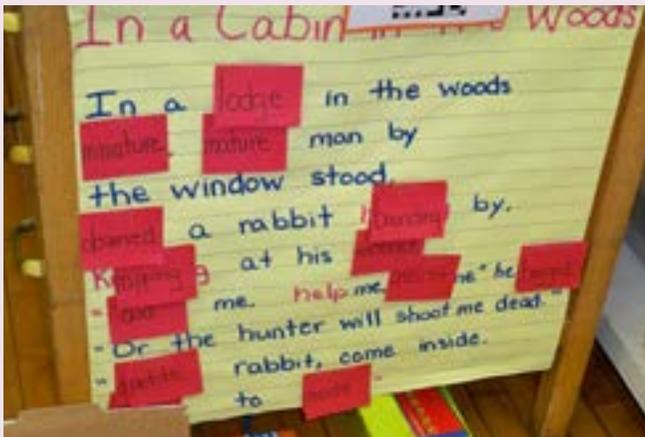
The retelling materials are stored in an inexpensive basket and are used as a portable station. Students can make retelling pieces and illustrate vocabulary cards for stories and informational texts across the year.



Third graders use the Frayer model to define new words from their core reading program (word cards come with the curriculum). There are two forms of the Frayer model for kids to choose from, depending on their reading group. Colored dots help kids pick the correct level to work on.



Students match words with definitions. Then they ask each other questions about the text (from a core reading program); the questions use the week's vocabulary from the selection they've been reading. For example, "Where might you find fossils in your state?" or "What is your favorite location to play and why?" The questions (from the teachers' edition) were typed on green paper and placed in a clear plastic sleeve. This is an oral language activity.



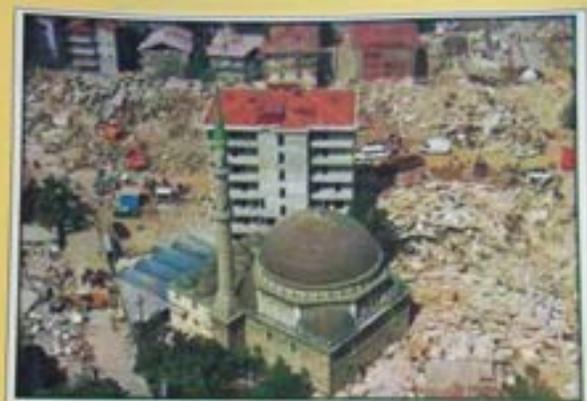
Partners read familiar poems and songs and substitute higher-level vocabulary on sticky notes on some of the words. Here they sing their own rendition of "Little Cabin in the Woods," using words such as *lodge*, *bounding*, and *miniature*. Kids brainstormed these new words in whole group.



In whole group, first graders read a Big Book about jobs. We made sticky-note labels of the names of the careers in the book. We also added a conversation card that said, "I infer that . . ." Kids later work at the Big Book station using these materials, talking together using the new vocabulary, and saying things like, "I infer that the chef is making a pizza, because he's throwing a big piece of dough into the air."



During whole group, the teacher makes word lists related to content-area topics of study with students. Children are encouraged to use these words when they speak in class. The word lists are then placed at the writing station for reference. The list above is from a kindergarten class that was watching chicks hatch from eggs. The list below is from a third-grade class studying earthquakes.



Some words you might use:

- ✍ earthquake
- ✍ force
- ✍ stress
- ✍ destruction
- ✍ plates
- ✍ fault
- ✍ seismic

Digging Deeper

I hope this chapter has you thinking about the foundation that oral language plays in all the reading and writing your students do. I've included the questions that follow to help you delve more deeply into considering how to integrate listening, speaking, and language throughout the school day. Remember that whenever we can help students make connections between what they are learning and how they can use this in their everyday lives, they will own the learning and show progress.

1. Do your students speak in complete sentences? How adamant are you that they do so? Discuss the importance of oral language and what you can do to increase opportunities for your students to speak in sentences and use higher-level vocabulary as they engage in conversations with adults and one another all day long.
2. How much speaking do your students do throughout the day? (Not just your “talkative kids” . . . but *all* your students.) Are *all* students talking with one another about what they're reading, writing, and learning? If you haven't yet tried it, work on establishing partner practice for students to have this opportunity at literacy work stations. Set up a “Let's talk” station and share results with colleagues.
3. Think about ways to expand opportunities for the listening station beyond basic listening to a story. Discuss ideas with your grade-level team. Use your state standards to plan for instruction and connected practice using ideas from this chapter.
4. What do you notice about your kids and how well they follow spoken directions? What ideas from this chapter will you try for strengthening this skill?
5. How are you currently teaching grammar to your class? Are children *using* words representing different parts of speech or simply *identifying* nouns and verbs? Create meaningful grammar-related anchor charts that will help your students think about how authors use different kinds of words (such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives).
6. With your grade-level team, look for literature you can use to plan meaningful grammar lessons, using the examples from this chapter. Plan for related literacy stations where students can apply what they're learning as they practice with a partner.
7. What does vocabulary instruction look like in your classroom? Look at your state standards for teaching vocabulary. Which do you think your children are mastering? Which do your kids need more exposure to and experience with?
8. Examine your whole-group lesson plans for the past few weeks. What kinds of lessons have you taught that specifically teach children about vocabulary? Discuss how effective these lessons have been for expanding your students' vocabulary.
9. Work with colleagues to find high-quality picture books and poems you can use for building vocabulary. Plan and teach whole-group vocabulary lessons using ideas from this chapter. Move this work to literacy stations for children to continue working with these same words. Share what you notice about your students' vocabulary growth.