

Using spoken language activities

Spoken language skills continue to develop over time and we all continue to build new vocabulary throughout life. There are lots of simple day to day activities that you can do which will really help to build your child's fluency and confidence when talking. Children in the later years of Primary school will continue to benefit from many of the activities in the KS1 section of this website, so take a look there for ideas too.

You can adjust the level of the vocabulary that you use to make the activity easier or a bit more challenging. It is important that they feel comfortable with what they are doing and that they are engaged and having fun.

Have a conversation

Help your child to understand that conversations are a two-way process. The speakers take turns. They listen attentively while the other person is talking. Then they talk about the topic being discussed. Adults should be aware that children do not always find it easy to remain attentive. Their short attention span is roughly equivalent to one minute per completed year of their life. Children who have difficulties with expressive language may be happy to contribute only in a small way, while the adult does most of the talking. The best way you can help develop your child's spoken language skills, is by listening to them and not rushing in to finish their sentence.

Take the opportunity to chat- when in the car, after a day out, after a television programme, at mealtimes, mornings and night-time. Tell your child about your own day and ask them about theirs. We all enjoy hearing about others' experiences and sometimes have funny stories to recount.

Activities

Describing

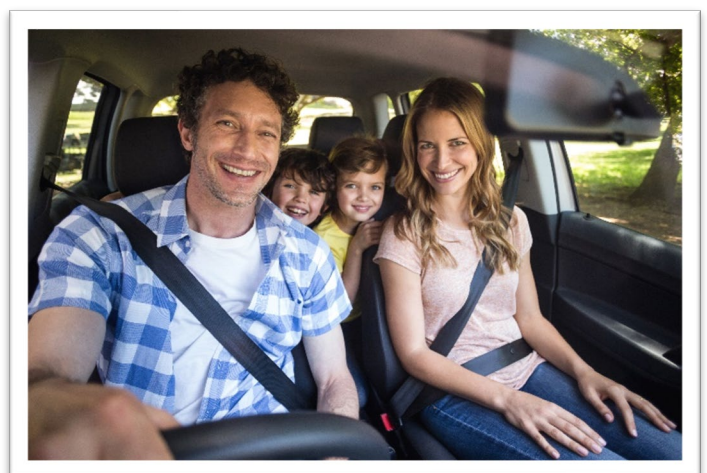
When your child mentions something that you haven't seen or goes somewhere new, ask them to describe it to you.

Adult: *'I don't think I know that. What's it like?'*

Use prompts to help you child develop their description, e.g.

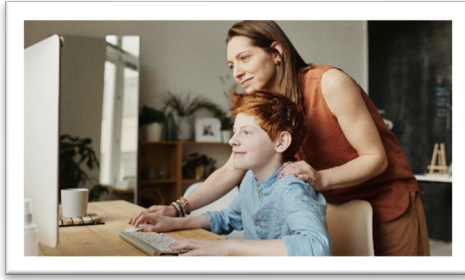
Adult: *'How big is it?'*

Adult: *'How would you describe it? Is it as big as a house or as big as an adult?'*



A reluctant talker might be happy enough giving Yes/No answers, so, to develop their conversation, try to ask questions that require more than Yes/No answers.

Explaining



Take opportunities to ask your child to explain what they are doing or have done.

Adult: *'How do you play that game? Can you tell me?'*

You and your child can have fun explaining to each other why something has happened? You will need to read the question to them.

This is an activity to develop your child's spoken language. Allow them time to give their answer and do not rush in and finish their sentences. Enjoy!

Creative Projects

Why not make something together. There is lots of language in the planning and the carrying out.

You could use construction toys like Lego. Decide what to make, sort the bricks and get started. Talk about what you are doing as you go:

Adult: *'I think I'm going to use yellow bricks to build the tower? What do you think?'*



Art Projects



It can be brilliant fun to make a model room or even a whole model house from junk materials. Plan what you want to put in your house and what materials you could use:

Adult: *'What do you think we could use for the bed?'*

Adult: *'Where do you think the bed should go?'*

Adult: *'What colour would look good on the bedroom walls?'*

Cooking

If you and your child like to cook, plan a meal together or bake a favourite cake. This could involve making a shopping list, naming the utensils used and building new vocabulary as you talk about the different things you need to do. When you've finished, ask them to try to retell the steps in sequence. Use prompts like 'First', 'Next' and 'Then'.



Using stories to develop language

Retell favourite familiar tales with your child. You can ask questions, such as; who/where/when/what? You could do this before bed perhaps, or any other time that suits. Ask the questions and let your child contribute as much as possible, but fill the gaps and help out as much as needed, e.g.

Adult: *'Ok, I'm going to tell the story and you can tell it to me afterwards in your own words. I'll help you by asking questions.'*

Adult tells the story of Hansel and Gretel.

Adult: *'Where is this story set?'*

Child: *'It is set in a little house beside a deep forest.'*

Adult: *'Who are the characters in the story?'*

Child: *'Hansel and Gretel, their father, their stepmother and a wicked witch are all in the story.'*

Adult: *'And can you tell me what happened?'*

You can develop the story as much as you or your child like.

You and your child can have fun creating a different ending in which Hansel and Gretel arrest the witch, or the stepmother has a change of heart and goes to rescue them.

Think of different words to describe the characters

Adult: *'Let's think of words to describe the characters, using words which start with the same sound as their names. This is called alliteration. e.g. Spiteful stepmother, Foolish father, Wizened witch, Hungry Hansel, Graceful Gretel.'*

Talk about the characters' qualities

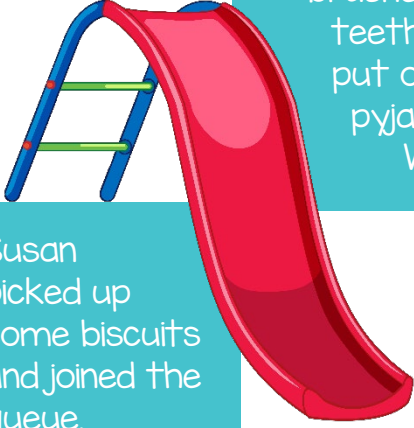
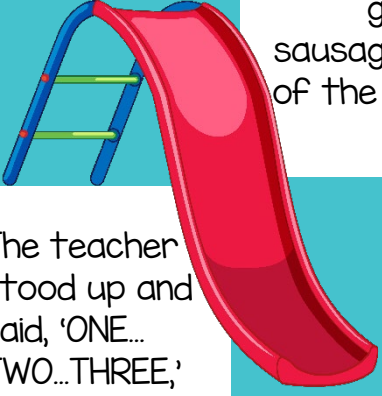
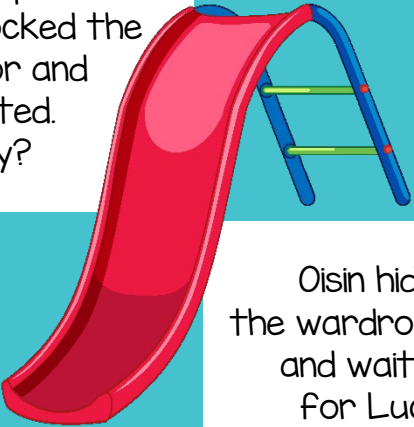
Adult: *'What do you think of their father? Is he a good father or is he weak and cowardly? What makes you think this?'*



Why?

You need a dice and counters for this game. Answer the questions when you land on a square.

Start at the top and try to whizz to the finish.

<p>The lady got a cup and turned on the kettle. Why?</p>		<p>The boy brushed his teeth and put on his pyjamas. Why?</p>	<p>Mummy put the clothes in the machine and pressed 'START'. Why?</p>	<p>START</p>
<p>Robyn was up a ladder with a bucket of water and a cloth. Why?</p>	<p>Susan picked up some biscuits and joined the queue. Why?</p>		<p>The nurse took the man's temperature. Why?</p>	<p>Jim put on his helmet and got his bike from the shed. Why?</p>
	<p>Daddy lit the charcoal and got the sausages out of the fridge. Why?</p>	<p>Jenny got the lead and called Sparky. Why?</p>	<p>Brian put on his life jacket and waterproof trousers. Why?</p>	<p>Mr. Jones put petrol in his car. Why?</p>
<p>The teacher stood up and said, 'ONE... TWO... THREE,' Why?</p>		<p>The postman knocked the door and waited. Why?</p>		<p>The cat sat by his food bowl and Miaowed! Why?</p>
<p>FINISH! WELL DONE!</p>	<p>Nancy looked at the sky and went back inside to get her umbrella. Why?</p>		<p>Oisín hid in the wardrobe and waited for Lucy. Why?</p>	<p>Jack had a cake with 8 candles and a present. Why?</p>

Vocabulary Building and Word Finding

It is very common for older children to have a vocabulary which would benefit from extension (Vocabulary Building) and/or to have difficulty finding the word that they are looking for (Word Finding). There are many simple ways to help; the first activities are easier, and they get progressively more challenging.

Fill in in the blanks

This is something you can practise while you are in the car or just have a few free minutes at home. It is not a reading challenge. The adult leads and says an incomplete sentence like those below, leaving a gap for your child to fill in the missing word;

Open the.....

Eyes, ears and.....

Socks and

Night and

The dog sleeps in his.....

A bunch of

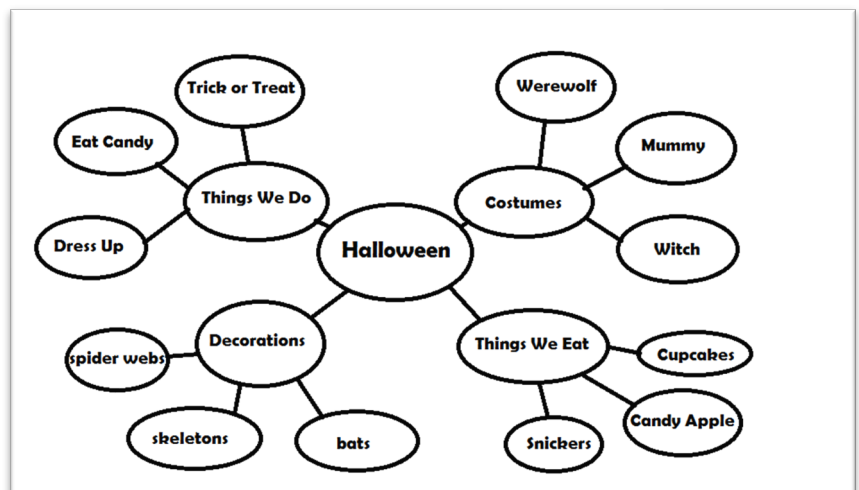
A pair of

Your child could say words like these; door, nose, shoes, day, kennel, flowers, trousers. Or it may be more fun to add another interesting or funny word. Whatever word pops into their head.

Word web challenge

Objects can be sorted into groups called categories because they belong together or have something important in common. Pick a category, e.g. Halloween, and take turns to say all the items you can in that category. This challenge is over when the adult or the child cannot add another word to the word web.

Other categories which you could use for sorting, are; Zoo Animals, Clothes, Rooms in a house, Footwear, Snacks, Woolly things, Vehicles, Body parts.



Word Riddles

What Am I?

In this game you give your child clues. From those clues, your child has to work out what you are thinking of. Here are some examples:

Adult: *'I am something in the house. I have four legs. My name starts with t-. You will find me beside some chairs. You put your plate and cup on top of me'.*

Your child will have fun guessing, as the first clues are very vague. The following clues become more specific.

Adult: *'I am an animal. You can see me in the zoo. I am scaly. My name starts with cr-. I might eat you if you come too close to me'.*



or

Adult: *'I am red. My name starts with f-. I have wheels. I have a siren'.*

Pause between each clue to let your child have thinking time.

Who Am I?

You can make this activity more entertaining, by asking your child to take the lead, asking you *'Who am I?'* and all they can say is *'Yes'* or *'No'*. Encourage them to have a go at making up their own challenge for you. Before the game, your child must collect pictures of famous people from newspapers or magazines. They must know a little bit about the celebrities, such as their name, home country, job, age, etc. Remember, in this game, your child is only allowed to reply *'Yes'*, or *'No'*.

Although they are not talking much in this activity, they are extending their vocabulary by listening to the words you say.

Grammar

You can help your child learn about grammar. It means looking at how sentences are put together. It tells us which order we put words in and what form of a word we use. The following parts of speech have their own special job;

- Verbs as often known as 'doing words'.
- Adverbs describe verbs.
- Nouns, which are the names of people, places, animals and things.
- Adjectives describe nouns.
- Pronouns are usually short words which stand in place of a noun.
- Prepositions show the position of a noun.
- Conjunctions link together word and sentences.

Sorting Nouns

We know that nouns are the names of people, places, animals and things. Some of these things go together, while others don't. Below we have four groups of nouns.

Like the other activities included on the Language and Communication website, this is not a reading exercise for the child. Your child should listen while you read and discuss each list.

Read the first list to your child, e.g.

Adult: *'Parka, Duffel, Anorak and Overcoat. Can you explain what they are? What would be a good name for this category?'*

Child: *'They are different types of coats'.*

Adult: *'Well done, that's exactly what they are. Could you add any more items to this list?'*

Name of category?	Name of category?	Name of category?	Name of category?
parka duffel anorak overcoat	toaster hairdryer deep fat fryer hoover table lamp	screwdriver hammer drill pliers saw	television PlayStation cinema iPod theatre

Categories

Children with Word-Finding difficulties find it easier to recall a word if they can associate it with a category, where they have filed it away in their memory. Common objects can be sorted into groups called categories because they belong together or have something important in common. We can name these categories or describe them.

Please read this list slowly to your child, and ask them to sort out the following things into the categories provided? There is an imposter who shouldn't be on this sheet. Can your child find it?

FOOTWEAR	VEHICLES	STATIONERY	CUTLERY

forklift, rubber, spoon, sandal, bus, sharpener, knife, flip-flop, ankle boot, glue stick, station wagon, teaspoon, taxi, articulated lorry, tablespoon, butter knife, walking boots, trainers, saucepan, motorbike, fork, ballerinas, clogs, stapler, flipper, paperclip, espadrilles, pens, tractor, fish knife, soup spoon, bulldozer, chopsticks, skewer, riding boots, ruler.

Pronouns

We know that pronouns are usually short words which stand in place of a noun. We use them to avoid repeating the same noun over and over again. Here is an example showing the use of he;

Younger child; *'I was playing in the park and I saw John. John was pushing his daughter on the big swings. John is a nice friendly man. John is your friend too, isn't he?'*

Older child; *'I was playing in the park and I saw John. He was pushing his daughter on the big swings. He is a nice friendly man. He is your friend too, isn't he?'*

Often children have difficulty using pronouns correctly. You should model the correct way to use pronouns, by gently acknowledging what the child is saying. Modelling and practising the correct use of pronouns is the best way to help your child develop these skills.

Child: *'I know him did it'.*

Adult: *'You say you know that he did it', or,*

Child: *'Jenny said her did it'.*

Adult: *'You're telling me that Jenny said she did it'.*



Pronoun Board Game

You can play the board game which follows to practise using pronouns correctly.

You need a dice and counters. When you land on a square, choose the correct pronoun to complete the sentence. Race to the finish.

PRONOUNS RACE

<p>Jake sees they/them at school.</p>	<p>Them/those people are lost.</p>	<p>Have they/them got tickets for the match?</p>	<p>Them/they got a new trampoline.</p>	 <p>WINNER! WELL DONE!</p>
<p>Those/them dogs are fierce.</p>	<p>We/us don't like the rain.</p>	<p>He/him won the race.</p>	<p>She/her is busy today.</p>	<p>Give me/I my teddy please.</p>
<p>It made us/we feel sad.</p>	<p>She/ her swam every day last summer.</p>	<p>Us/we love gymnastics.</p>	<p>I saw she/her at swimming.</p>	<p>Tom picked I/me for his team.</p>
<p>I/me visited my Granda after school.</p>	<p>Granny gave I/me a pound.</p>	<p>Us/we went to the cinema last night.</p>	<p>Tell him/he about the film</p>	<p>Granny bought I/me a doughnut.</p>
<p>START HERE</p>	<p>He/him is reading his new book,</p>	<p>Give me/I the hammer please</p>	<p>Mum gave she/her a lift to school.</p>	<p>He/him is having a coffee.</p>

Practising verb tenses

If we are talking about doing something today, we use a 'doing word', or a verb. If it is something which is happening at the present time, we use the present tense.

If we are talking about doing something in the past, we use a verb, in the past tense because it is something which has happened in the past.

Yesterday game

Play a 'yesterday' game in which you take turns to make up sentences about what you did yesterday. This is a good way to practise using the past tenses of verbs. If your child makes a mistake, just model the correct word for them by repeating what they have said accurately, e.g.

Child: *'Yesterday I getted up early.'*

Adult: *'Yes, yesterday, you got up early.'*

Child: *'Yesterday I eated a fried egg for breakfast.'*

Adult: *'Yes, yesterday you ate a fried egg for breakfast.'*



Past Tense Memory Game

You can make this more challenging and more fun by making it into a memory game by adding to the list at each turn, e.g.

Child: *'Yesterday you got up early and ate a fried egg for breakfast.'*

Adult: *'Yesterday I got up early, ate a fried egg for breakfast, and tidied the kitchen.'*

Child: *'Yesterday you got up early, ate a fried egg for breakfast, tidied the kitchen and fed the pets.'*

Next Summer Game

Of course, you can also practise the future tense by playing the same game, e.g.

Child: *'Next summer we will go on holidays.'*

Adult: *'Next summer we will go on holidays and we will swim in the sea.'*

Child: *'Next summer we will go on holidays and we will swim in the sea and we will eat fish and chips.'*

Adult: *'Next summer we will go on holidays and we will swim in the sea, we will eat fish and chips and we will ride on the dodgems.'*

