

Dialogue Toolkit – Progression Document

Purpose: to create dialogue that sounds real, reflects character and moves action forward.			
Reception	Year 1 and 2 As in Reception plus:	Year 3 and 4 As in Year 1 and 2 plus:	Year 5 and 6 As in Year 3 and 4 plus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use puppets/ dolls and make up funny voices when playing. • Role-play different characters. • Adults model reading aloud using different voices for characters. • Discussion of what characters say and why. • On story maps, write simple speech inside speech bubbles. • Notice speech marks in shared/ guided reading. • When the sound is turned down in films, discuss what characters might be saying. • Use wordless picture books and discuss what characters might say. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use correctly punctuated question sentences starting with who, what, when, where, why or how. • Choose and describe how a character feels, thinks or behaves and show this through what they say – <i>“I’m scared.”</i> • Use powerful synonyms for ‘said’ that reveals how a character said something – <i>whispered, squealed, roared, whispered.</i> • Use said plus an adverb that adds emotion – <i>he said nervously.</i> <p>Introduce a few speech punctuation rules that are to be taught in Year 3 and 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write what is said, starting with a capital letter, and the punctuation inside a speech bubble. • Burst the bubble to leave speech marks around what is said. • Start a new line for each speaker. • Start the spoken words with a capital letter. • If the sentence ends with speech, put a . / ! / ? inside the speech marks. If the sentence continues, end the speech with a comma. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate speech punctuation rules (see Year 1 and 2). • Use only a few exchanges, balancing description, action and dialogue. • Tag on what a character is doing whilst speaking, using a dtage direction – <i>“No,” he hissed, shaking his head.</i> • Use a speech sandwich: character A speaks, action or description, character b speaks – <i>“Hello,” said John, waving to his friend and smiling.</i> <i>“Lovely to see you,” Tim replied.</i> • Use dialogue to suggest how a character feels, thinks or what they are like. • Use quirky expressions to show character – <i>“Crazy cats,” she muttered.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have characters discuss other characters or reflect in events – <i>“I cannot believe Sam ignored me earlier,” Kabir muttered.</i> • Add to the speech sandwich by adding in the listener’s reaction – <i>“Hello,” said John, waving to his friend. Tim gasped.</i> • Add in some action before character B replies – <i>“Hello,” said John, waving to his friend. Tim gasped. Coming down the road was an elephant.</i> <i>“Run for it!” squealed Tim.</i> • Explore a variety of formal and informal techniques to develop a character’s voice, such as apostrophes for omission and question tags – <i>“We was lovin’ that yesterday, weren’t we?”</i> • Begin some reported speech sentences with verbs and adverbs – <i>Screaming hysterically, Lisa shouted for help.</i> • Put the speaker before or after what is said or in between <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Sam said, “So, let’s go.”</i> - <i>“So, let’s go,” said Sam.</i> - <i>“So,” said Sam, “Let’s go.”</i>

Useful ideas for teaching dialogue – always co-construct the toolkit with the class.

Reception	Year 1 and 2 As in Reception plus:	Year 3 and 4 As in Year 1 and 2 plus:	Year 5 and 6 As in Year 3 and 4 plus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide role-play spaces, costumes, hats and objects/toys to encourage role-play and re-enacting of stories. • Provide puppets and play with children • Use picture books and big books-read aloud together with expression, emphasising who says what and how – discuss how characters feels and how we know. • Read together using voices to match how a character feels. • Discuss what character might be thinking and what they might do or say next. • Use Post-its in Big Books or on screen to add in dialogue. • Capture what children say on laminated speech bubbles and provide for play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on dialogue in reading and work out simple rules. • Display dialogue rules and examples on washing lines and on support cards. • Rehearse dialogue in shared writing but keep it limited. • Draw cartoons with speech bubbles for stories. • Practice turning speech bubbles into dialogue. • Use Post-its to innovate on speech verbs, adding in adverbs or changing what is said. • Change a character’s personality and then alter what they say. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add ideas to class dialogue rules by reading quality literature, display, model in shared writing and practise. • Use paired drama to develop what is said and how it is said with expression mirroring how a character feels plus a simple action, <i>e.g. pointing at the chair.</i> • Model in pairs what character A says and the reply from character B; then add in stage directions for both. • Collect expressions from books but also from listening in to other people speaking. • Make lists of idioms and everyday expressions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice in reading how other characters or the author reflect on a main character. • In drama, use the game ‘gossip’ or ‘spies’ to develop the idea of other characters commenting on a key character. • Identify in reading and model in shared writing how the listener reacts; use drama to explore how reactions can be ‘shown’. • Explore dialogue in quality books and add extra ideas to the class dialogue rules and tips. • Innovate on extracts of dialogue from novels, using same style as author. • Innovate from novels by changing how a character feels, using ‘show not tell’ and altering what they say – can a partner guess how your character feels?