

Belonging to a talk-rich Trust

Oracy at Abbey Multi Academy
Trust

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Introduction

Abbey Multi Academy Trust is proud to be a 'talk-rich trust' where every child's voice is valued. We are committed to developing the vital communication skills of all our young people so that they are supported and empowered to become confident, articulate, and globally minded citizens of the future. Our approach fosters a culture of fluent, proficient communication within our academies, with innovative teaching and learning at its core. By working in partnership to educate, nurture, and empower, we ensure that oracy remains a fundamental pillar of our educational ethos.

Our shared aims are:

- To embed high standards of oracy across all key phases and subject areas.
- To establish a shared language for oracy within the Trust.
- To empower our young people to use language confidently and with purpose in a range of contexts.
- To ensure that quality first teaching incorporates explicit oracy development.
- To engage all young people in rich, meaningful discussions that enhance their learning and critical thinking skills.

Our Approach

At Abbey Multi Academy Trust, we continue to work in close partnership with Voice 21, a national leader in oracy education. Our approach to implementing oracy strategies is research-based and designed to provide both teachers and students with a 'talk-tool kit' that enhances our young people's ability to communicate effectively. All eight schools within our Trust have a designated Oracy Lead and Oracy Champions who are responsible for driving the strategic implementation of oracy practices.

Our Talk-tool kit

Our 'talk-tool kit' incorporates the following key strategies:

- [100 Tier 2 Words](#)
- [Pre-teaching ambitious vocabulary using oracy](#)
- [The formality scale](#)
- [Harkness discussions](#)
- [Talk Tactics](#)
- [Concept Cartoons](#)

Each of these strategies plays a crucial role in supporting pupils' language development and comprehension, ensuring that they can articulate ideas clearly, reason effectively, and engage confidently in dialogue.

Talk-Toolkit Strategies

100 Tier 2 Words and the pre-teaching of vocabulary

What it is

Tier 2 vocabulary consists of high-utility words that appear across various subjects and contexts, enriching students' language proficiency. Tier 3 words are subject-specific vocabulary that is used within academic disciplines. These words are typically not used in everyday conversation but are essential for understanding and discussing topics within subjects like Science, Mathematics, History, and Geography.

Impact on Learning

- Improves comprehension and written expression.
- Enhances students' ability to articulate ideas in a sophisticated manner.
- Bridges the gap between spoken and academic language.

Top Tips for Implementation

- Introduce and model the use of Tier 2 words in everyday classroom discussions.
- Create word walls or vocabulary logs to reinforce learning.
- Encourage students to use new vocabulary in writing and speaking activities
- Use the Frayer model to teach the word and its annunciation
- Use interactive activities such as 'word detective' tasks.
- Implement peer/ group discussions to explore word meanings in context.



Formality Scale

What it is

A structured approach to help students understand how to adapt their language depending on context and audience.

Impact on Learning

- Develops students' awareness of appropriate language use in different settings.
- Supports formal writing and presentation skills.

Top Tips for Implementation

- Use role-play scenarios to practise shifting between formal and informal registers.
- Encourage students to evaluate and discuss different forms of communication.
- Use the scale to support 'speak like a specialist' strategies.



Harkness Discussions

What it is

A student-led discussion format that encourages collaborative, exploratory dialogue.

Impact on Learning

- Enhances critical thinking and reasoning skills.
- Encourages deep engagement with texts and ideas.
- Develops confidence in verbal expression.

Top Tips for Implementation

- Establish clear discussion norms and expectations.
- Use visual mapping to track contributions and ensure balanced participation.
- Provide question stems to support structured debate.



Talk Tactics

What it is

A set of structured conversational strategies that help students build, challenge, and extend discussions.

Impact on Learning

- Fosters active listening and respectful discourse.
- Encourages deeper reasoning and justification of ideas.

Top Tips for Implementation

- Introduce talk tactics through sentence stems and modelled examples.
- Use small-group discussions to practise different tactics before whole-class engagement.
- Encourage students to reflect on their use of talk tactics in discussions.



Concept Cartoons

What it is

Visual representations of key concepts that prompt discussion and debate.

Impact on Learning

- Encourages students to verbalise their reasoning and challenge misconceptions.
- Supports engagement and critical thinking.

Top Tips for Implementation

- Use concept cartoons as starter activities to spark discussion.
- Encourage students to explain their reasoning and justify their perspectives.
- Link discussions to real-world applications to deepen understanding.



CPD and Professional Development

Our commitment to oracy extends to continuous professional development for staff. For our leaders of oracy, we work in partnership to empower innovation and effective implementation of the oracy framework within schools. We use instructional coaching to develop talk-rich classrooms and embed oracy-centred pedagogy and practice.

Current CPD Initiatives:

- Half-Termly Oracy Network Meetings: All Oracy Leads across the Trust attend regular sessions to share best practices, receive training and refine strategies.
- Annual Research Projects: Each year, we conduct an oracy-based research project, evaluating its impact and scaling up successful strategies to enhance our Trust's talk-toolkit.
- Termly Newsletter: We publish a dedicated oracy newsletter, keeping all stakeholders informed about key developments, research findings and success stories.
- Collaboration with Voice 21: A number of our schools work closely with Voice 21, accessing continued professional development through The Exchange, an online learning platform that supports open collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Conclusion

Oracy is at the heart of Abbey Multi Academy Trust's vision for outstanding teaching and learning. By embedding a structured and research-driven approach, we are equipping our students with the essential skills needed for academic success and lifelong communication. Through our partnership with Voice 21 and the dedication of our Oracy Leads and Champions, we ensure that all pupils develop the confidence and ability to express themselves effectively in any setting.

By making oracy a priority, we empower our young people to become articulate, thoughtful, and engaged citizens, ready to thrive in the world beyond the classroom.

Find out more about Oracy at Abbey Multi Academy Trust on our website
<http://www.abbeymat.co.uk/oracy-2/welcome>

