

Preparing for group work

These two short lessons have been used effectively as a preparation for group work at the computer.

Lesson One

(**Note :** This lesson could be tackled over two shorter sessions if preferred. It is divided into two parts)

Resources

Picture cards about situations or things that could involve talk

Objectives

To raise children's awareness of talk
"We are learning to talk about talk"

Possible criteria for success:

Children are able to talk to each other about the kind of talk that might be happening in a range of situations.

Children can describe their discussion to the whole class.

Children are able to listen to each other

Children can say some of the things that make a good talker

Children can say some of the things that make a good listener

Part One

Whole Class Introduction

Begin with a whole class discussion about talk. These questions could be starting points for the discussion.

1. Who thinks they are a talkative person?
2. Who thinks they are a quiet person?
3. Who do you like talking to?
4. When are you asked not to talk? Why?
5. What does 'chatterbox' mean?
6. Why is it really helpful to be able to talk?
7. What sort of things can we do by talking together?

Now show the children the pictures. Ask them to tell the rest of the class what they can see happening in the pictures.

Group Work

Arrange the class into groups of 3. Give each group one of the picture cards and ask them to talk together to decide what talk could be going on. Allow a few minutes for this discussion.

Whole class Activity

Ask each group to report back on what talk they thought might be happening in their picture.

Part Two

Show children the word cards. Ask what they think the words mean. Can they use the words in a sentence?

Explain that as well as talking, they are now going to practise listening to each other.

Group Work

Ask the children to find a partner. Explain that you are going to time them for one minute. In that minute one partner is going to tell the other about something. It could be a pet, a brother or sister, a favourite toy or game, a recent shopping trip, or perhaps a birthday. When one minute has passed, ask the partners to swap roles. Now repeat the activity.

Now ask some children to report back to the class what their partner has told them.

Repeat the group activity two or three times, asking the children to find new partners

Plenary: Whole class work

Remind the children that the lesson has been about talking. Who did they find was a good talker? Why?

Collect some ideas together about what makes a good talker, e.g. someone who can share their ideas, someone who gives reasons for their ideas, someone who will try to answer questions about what they have said

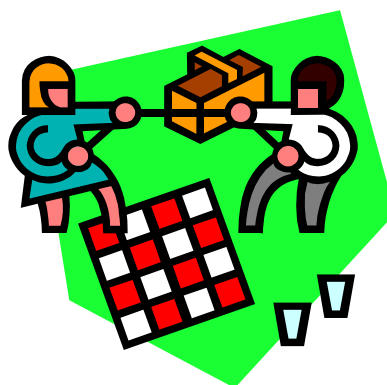
The lesson has been about listening as well as talking. Who did they find was a good listener? Why?

Collect some ideas together about what makes a good listener, e.g. someone who looks at you while you are talking, someone who sits still, someone who shows you that they are interested in what you have said.

Now link these ideas about talking and listening to situations when children are asked to work in groups at the computer. How might things that make a good talker and a good listener be useful/ Look at the word cards again. Why might some of these words be helpful when you are working in groups at the computer? What kind of work is better done when you are working with other people at a computer?

Evaluation: discuss whether the lesson aims have been achieved.

Talk Lesson 1: Picture Cards





Talk Lesson 1: Word Cards

decide

remember

persuade

tell

ask

interrupt

describe

argue

opinion

reason

discuss

share

listen

Introduction to Talk
Lesson Two
Talk Box Rules
(see separate notes for this lesson)

Resources

Playground and sports equipment
Large pieces of paper and marker pens for each group

Objectives

To establish a set of 'ground rules' for talk.

"We are learning to agree a set of ground rules for talking to each other"

Possible criteria for success:

Children are able to decide some ground rules

Children can say why rules are important

Children can reach an agreement about the ground rules for talk

Whole Class Introduction

Ask for volunteers to choose an article of sports equipment. As each article is selected ask the children to suggest a 'rule' that might be associated to the sport it represents. Introduce the concept of 'Ground Rules' as basic rules that everyone agrees to. Now discuss with the class the sort of ground rules they think are important for talk, based on their experience of group discussion in earlier lessons. Stress to the children that in this kind of talk all opinions will be valued and that, most crucially, opinions must be backed up by a *reason*.

Group work

Ask each talk group to talk together to decide on two ground rules that they feel are important in the talk lessons. Ask them to write these on the large sheets of paper.

Plenary: Whole class

Ask each group to report back on the rules that they felt were important. Make a note of the rules. When the list is complete explain to the class that it is very important that they understand that they are agreeing to talk together using these rules from now on. After the lesson, make a poster of the rules and display it in the classroom.

Further group work

Now ask each group to agree on a ground rule for talk that might be especially important if a group is working together at the computer.

Whole class work

Ask each group to report back on these ground rules for talk at the computer. Again, make a note of the rules. As before, explain that they are going to try to use these rules from now on. (See notes for suggested rules).

Evaluation: discuss whether the lesson objectives have been achieved. Refer to the criteria for success as a means of considering whether the objectives have been achieved

Teachers' Notes for Lesson Two

This is a key lesson in which the basic ground rules for talk are agreed and established with the class.

Ground rules for talk

The following rules have been found to encourage educationally effective discussion.

1. All relevant information is shared amongst the group
2. Assertions and opinions should be backed up with reasons
3. Suggestions and opinions can be challenged and discussed
4. Alternative opinions are considered before any decision is made. Each person in turn should be invited to speak.
5. Everyone in the group should be encouraged to speak by the other members.
6. The group should try to reach an agreement.
7. The group accepts collective responsibility for decisions made and any actions taken because of these decisions.

It is vital to stress that all opinions will be valued and that, most importantly, all assertions must be backed up with a reason.

During the lesson, encourage the children to create their own version of these rules. Make sure that they understand that they are different from other rules relating to talk that they may have come across, such as don't talk in assembly or don't shout in the classroom.

Ensure that the children understand that they are agreeing to talk together using these rules from now on when they are working together in groups.

Rules for working together at the computer could include:

1. Remember to use the ground rules for talk
2. Talk together to decide on how to solve a problem
3. Agree what to do before clicking onto the next screen
4. sort out who is using the mouse and keyboard before you start, so that it doesn't get in the way of the talk about the program.