

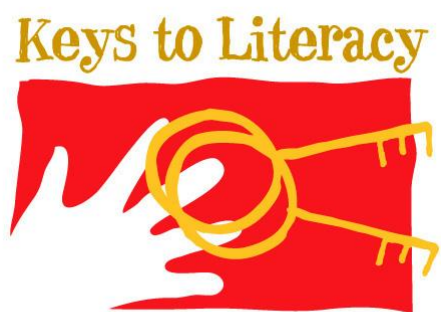
Webinar:

Developing Oral Language to Support Early Literacy Instruction, Grades K-3

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The content of this webinar and handout packet is adapted from *Module 2 Oral Language* in the *Keys to Beginning Reading* professional development course. To learn more about this course, visit <https://keystoliteracy.com/offering/keys-to-beginning-reading/>



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Oral Language: Developing Speaking and Listening Skills

The Language-Literacy Connection

Language skills and literacy achievement are highly correlated; research consistently demonstrates that the more children know about language, the better equipped they are to succeed in reading and writing (Burns et al., 1999, Mehta et al., 2005, Pennington et al., 2019). The language children are exposed to at home and in school influences the development of their language comprehension, which in turn influences their fluency, vocabulary development and comprehension of written and media texts. Effective literacy instruction must include teaching that fosters language development, especially for students who enter kindergarten with weak language skills. In addition, supporting the development of language skills is essential for all students who are learning English as a second language (Calderon, 2011).

The “Language Rich” Classroom

How teachers talk with children is important!

As models of academic language for young students, it is essential that teachers speak with precision and correctness. Teachers must be conscious of their own language in the classroom, being careful not to over simplify the way they speak by purposely using basic vocabulary and simple sentences. Likewise, teachers should encourage students to use precise and extended language.

Boosting Everyday Language: What commonly used words and phrases do you use that could be replaced with more sophisticated vocabulary?

Examples:

- Come **sit** on the **rug**. / **Assemble** on the **carpet**
- **Stuff** / **belongings, materials, learning tools**
- **Sit** on the **edge** of the **rug**. / **Assemble** on the **perimeter** of the **carpet**.

Provide opportunities for students to:

- Hear and use uncommon academic vocabulary
- Hear and use increasingly complex sentences
- Use more words to express ideas and to ask questions
- Hear and express reasoned phrasing

Here are some suggestions for modeling and encouraging use of academic language:

- Set high expectations for language use for yourself and students, including use of challenging vocabulary and sentence structure.
- Use sophisticated words when talking with students to expand their vocabularies.
- Draw students’ attention to fluctuations in speech rate and words that are stressed depending on the situation (e.g., giving directions, being funny, being upset about something).
- Emphasize intonation and model appropriate stress patterns when speaking.
- Emphasize punctuation use when reading aloud.
- Ask students to restate or paraphrase what others have said.
- Model for students how to extend answers to questions.

- Ask students to generate text dependent questions.

Ask yourself these questions to help make sure you are supporting academic language:

- Is my curriculum and classroom environment rich in print, literature, and language?
- Do I provide time for children to look, listen, and talk about books?
- Do I integrate writing, speaking, listening, and reading into all content areas?
- Do I encourage students to talk about their personal experiences, cultures, and ideas?
- Do I provide accountable-talk scaffolds (e.g., sentence starters and/or sentence frames) to support language and learning?

Teaching Listening Skills

Students benefit from explicit instruction and modeling for how to listen and respond to others. Teachers can model and then have students practice through role-play the following:

- How to make eye contact when listening
- How to be aware of non-verbal cues provided by the speaker
- How to take turns and avoid interrupting
- How to ask relevant questions to clarify what is heard
- How to monitor their listening to stay on topic

The Listening Ladder (Eisenhart, 2008)

This procedure can be used to highlight what a good listener does. Consider making a classroom poster of the *Listening Ladder*.

- **L**ook at the person speaking to you.
- **A**sk questions.
- **D**on't interrupt
- **D**on't change the subject
- **E**xtend the conversation
- **R**espond verbally and non-verbally



Activity: Second Set Partners

This activity promotes active listening and practice paraphrasing another person's comments. Directions:

- Students work in pairs.
- The teacher poses a question.
- Students turn and talk to share their answers with each other.
- They are responsible for remembering their partner's answer and paraphrasing it back to him or her.
- Students switch to another partner and paraphrase to the new partner what the old partner said.
- The teacher poses a new question and the activity continues.

Additional Listening Activities

- Listening Walk
- Recognize familiar sounds (on tape)
- Matching sounds (sound cans)
- Echo activities
- Conversation centers

- Repeat clapping patterns
- Guess who is speaking?
- Whisper Down the Line
- Show and Ask
- Simon Says

Developing Discussion Skills

Many children, especially in kindergarten and grade 1, face challenges as they learn how to communicate with others in the classroom. The teacher plays an important role in helping students learn to share their ideas with partners, in small group discussion, or during whole class instruction.

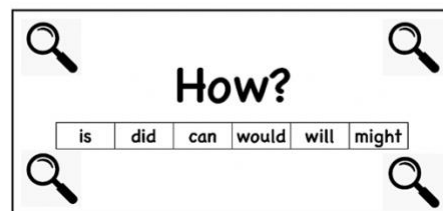
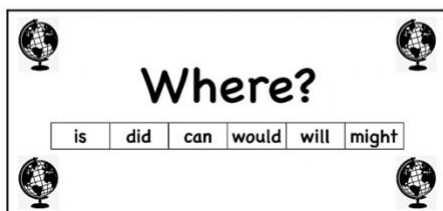
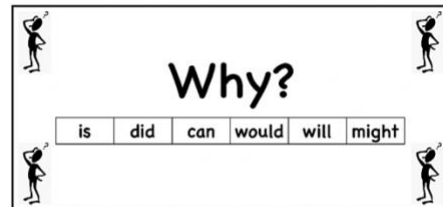
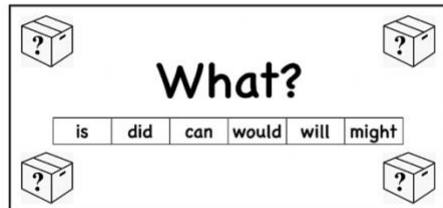
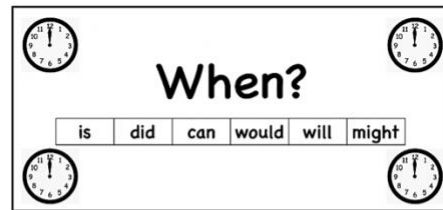
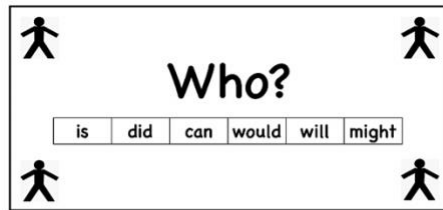
Support Elaborated Discussion: The “W” Words

Some students do not regularly speak in full sentences or elaborate on their ideas when they share with others in conversation. Teaching students how to use basic “W” question words (*who, what, where, when, why, and how*) is one way to develop speaking and listening skills.

Common Core Connection: Reading Standard #1 focuses on students asking questions about reading, and specifically notes that by the end of grade 2 students should be able to ask the “W” questions:

- **K and Grade 1:** With prompting and support, **ask** and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **Grade 2:** **Ask** and answer questions such as **who, what, where, when, why** and **how** to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- **Grade 3:** **Ask** and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

View the examples below of “W” cards that can be used as prompts. Notice that the words *is, did, can, would, will,* and *might* are added to help students generate wording. Print large versions of the words onto cards for a classroom pocket chart that can be used to prompt classroom discussions, or make smaller card sets to give to pairs or small groups of students. Large copies of the “W” cards are included at the end of this handout packet. Free copies are available at the Keys to Literacy website: <https://keystoliteracy.com/free-resources/templates-printables/> in the *Keys to Beginning Reading* section.



Support Elaborated Discussion: Peer Conversation Cards

Students need to learn that a conversation requires a meaningful exchange between two people – both must follow the rules of turn-taking, listening, and responding. A set of three peer discussion cards can be used to teach and practice peer conversation skills. The cards include the words *Statement*, *Question*, and *Restate*. If you are working with younger students who are not able to read the words, you can replace the words with visual symbols that represent the words, as in the examples below. Larger copies of the cards are included at the end of this handout packet module and can also be downloaded from the Keys to Literacy website:

<https://keystoliteracy.com/free-resources/templates-printables/> in the *Keys to Beginning Reading* section.

Activity Directions:

- Print out sets of the 3 discussion cards on card stock. Ask students to work in groups of 3 and give each group a set of cards. For the first round, each student will take one of the cards.
- The teacher gives students a topic for the discussion (e.g., a character from a recent read aloud, an interesting picture to react to, a topic such as a favorite movie or game).
- The first student begins by holding up the *Statement* card and makes a statement related to the topic.
- The next student holds up the *Question* card and poses a question based on the first student’s statement. If students need a scaffold, ask them to consider the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *how* words for ideas about what to say.
- The last student holds up the *restate* card and restates in his or her own words what the first or second student said.



- The students switch cards and continue the process. The second- and third-round discussions can be about the original topic, or the teacher can provide a new topic for each round.

Scaffolding Language During Discussions

Here are some suggestions for things you can do to scaffold and give feedback to students while they are engaged in discussions:

- Provide a language model by thinking aloud what a student's response might be.
- Use questions and prompts to get students to elaborate.
- Expand and recast students' utterances into full sentences, then have them repeat the sentence back.
- Request clarification when students' meaning is unclear.
- Help students think about their listener's perspective.

Talk Moves

Language-rich classroom discussions are one outcome of a classroom where students' thoughts are welcome and where students are regularly expected to speak, listen, and respond to one another. *Talk moves* are strategies that help the teacher and students build that culture.

TERC Talk Moves

The talk moves listed below are adapted from the work of Michaels and O'Connor (2012) as part of a project developed by TERC (Technical Education Research Center) and *The Inquiry Project* to support talking about science (https://inquiryproject.terc.edu/prof_dev/Goals_and_Moves.cfm.html). The project organized nine talk moves into four *Goals for Productive Discussion*, as listed below. It is important to modify the "goals" and "talk" moves depending on the needs of your students.

Goal 1: Help Individual Students Share, Expand and Clarify Their Own Thinking

1. Time to Think

- partner talk
- writing as think time
- wait time

2. Say More

- "Can you say more about that?"
- "What do you mean by that?"
- "Can you give an example?"

3. So, Are You Saying

- "So, let me see if I've got what you're saying. Are you saying...?"
- (Always leave space for the original student to agree or disagree and say more)

Goal 2: Help Students Listen Carefully to One Another

4. Who Can Rephrase or Repeat?

- "Who can repeat what _____ just said or put it into their own words?"
- (After a partner talk) "What did your partner say?"

Goal 3: Help Students Deepen Their Reasoning

5. Asking for Evidence or Reasoning

- "Why do you think that?" "What's your evidence?"

- "How did you arrive at that conclusion?"
6. Challenge or Counterexample
- "Does it always work that way?" "How does that idea square with ____ example?"

Goal 4: Help Students Think With Others

7. Agree/Disagree and Why?
- "Do you agree/disagree?" "And why?" "What do people think about what _____ said?"
 - "Does anyone want to respond to that idea?"
8. Add On
- "Who can add on to the idea that _____ is building?"
 - "Can anyone take that suggestion and push it a little further?"
9. Explaining What Someone Else Means
- "Who can explain what _____ means when she said that?"
 - "Who thinks they could explain why _____ came up with that answer?"
 - "Why do you think he said that?"

Basic Talk Moves

(adapted from Michaels & O'Connor, 2012)

Wait Time – Think Time	The teacher allows quiet thinking time for students to develop responses. Wait time should be given not only after presenting a question, but also after calling on a student. Waiting for a student response may feel uncomfortable to some, but with practice it becomes natural. Students who are normally quiet can provide especially insightful responses if the teacher uses wait time. This move allows more students to participate and builds confidence in those less accustomed to speaking out.
Revoicing	The teacher repeats a part or all of a student's utterance and asks the student to verify whether the interpretation is correct. This can be especially helpful to teachers when they do not understand what was said. The student's role is to verify. E.g., "I infer ... is that right? Is that correct?"
Add On – Say More	The teacher asks a student to elaborate or add on to what he said, or the teacher asks another student to add on or say more about a classmate's contribution. This move is sometimes overlooked because it is so straightforward. Students enjoy having a platform from which to start their follow up comment. E.g., "Can you say more about that?"
Repeating/Rephrasing	The teacher asks a student to restate a contribution of a classmate, either verbatim or paraphrased. Repeating, especially when reformulated in a student's own words, requires another layer of thinking. This move changes the level at which students listen because the expectation is that students may be called on to repeat. E.g., "Can someone rephrase that?"
Example or Counterexample	The teacher asks a student to provide an example or counter-example of his or a classmate's contribution. This move serves as an effective check for understanding. E.g., "Can you give an example of what you mean?"
Agree or Disagree	The teacher asks students whether they agree or disagree with a comment, then also asks why. It is important to add the <i>why</i> when using this move. This is an effective move to control and encourage close attention to classmates' contributions. E.g., "Who agrees or disagrees, and why? Does anyone have a different view?"

Press for Reasoning	The teacher asks students to explain how or why they came to their position. This move is referred to as “press for reasoning” and may include asking why, requiring evidence, referring to text. E.g., “Why do you think that? What led you to think about it that way? Can you explain your reasoning to us? How did you figure that out?”
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Talk Moves: Sentence Starters

Here are some sentence starters that you can provide students to support classroom discussion. To get started, focus on one category at a time, or select three or four from across the categories.

<p>Making a Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That is a good idea because... • That is confusing because... • I disagree with ___ because... 	<p>Adding a Comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you mean when you said...? • Do you think that ...? • Why is that happening? • Why do you think that way? • What led you to that conclusion? 	<p>Clarifying Something:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now I understand ___ because ... • No, I think it means ... • I agree with ___ because ... • What I heard you say is ... • I don’t understand ___, but I do understand ___ because ...
<p>Expressing an Opinion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think/believe that ... • It seems to me that ... • In my opinion ... 	<p>Soliciting a Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think? • We haven’t heard from ___ yet. • Do you agree? • What answer did you get? 	<p>Making a Prediction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that ___ will happen because ... • I wonder if ... • Based on ... I infer that ...
<p>Making a Connection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This reminds me of ... • This is like ___ when ... • This is like ___, but different because ... 	<p>Paraphrasing What Someone Said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So, you are saying that ... • In other words, you think ... • What I hear you saying is ... 	<p>Acknowledging Others’ Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My idea is similar to/related to ___’s idea that ... • I agree with what ___ is saying.

Developing Language Through Read Aloud

The Importance of Read Aloud

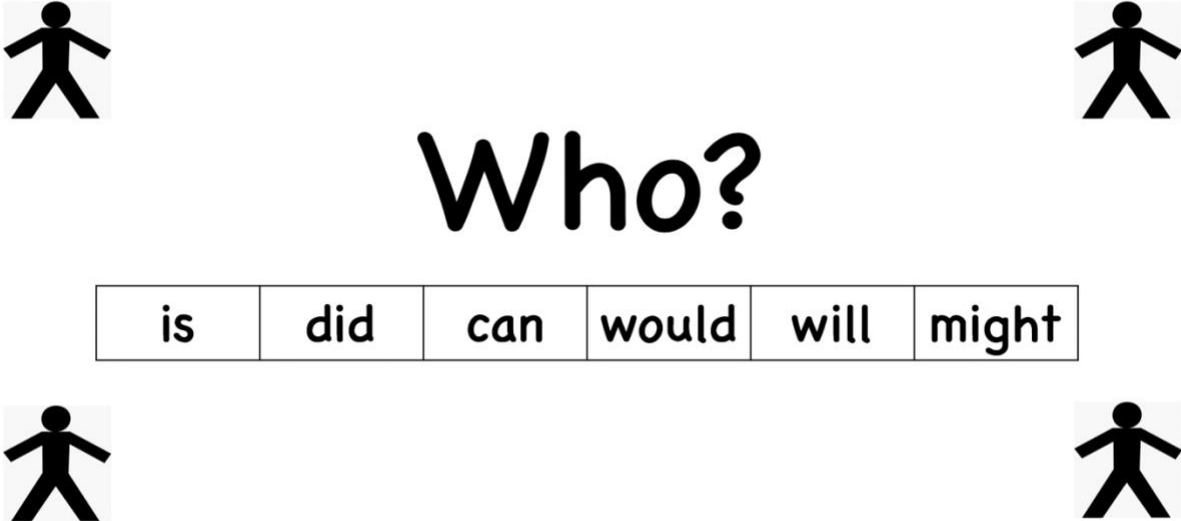
“Reading aloud with children is known to be the single most important activity for building the knowledge and skills they will eventually require for learning to read.” Marilyn Jaeger Adams (*Reading Rockets*)

Using read aloud in the primary classroom develops oral language skills, increases vocabulary, supports concept development and comprehension, and provides opportunities to teach and model text structure. In addition, reading and thinking builds oral reading fluency through modeling accuracy, rate, punctuated expression, reasoned phrasing and text-driven prosody (i.e., intonation, rhythm, stress, and tempo). All primary teachers recognize the myriad ways that reading aloud to young students is valuable. In this oral language module, the focus is on using read aloud to develop language skills.

Suggestions for Read Aloud

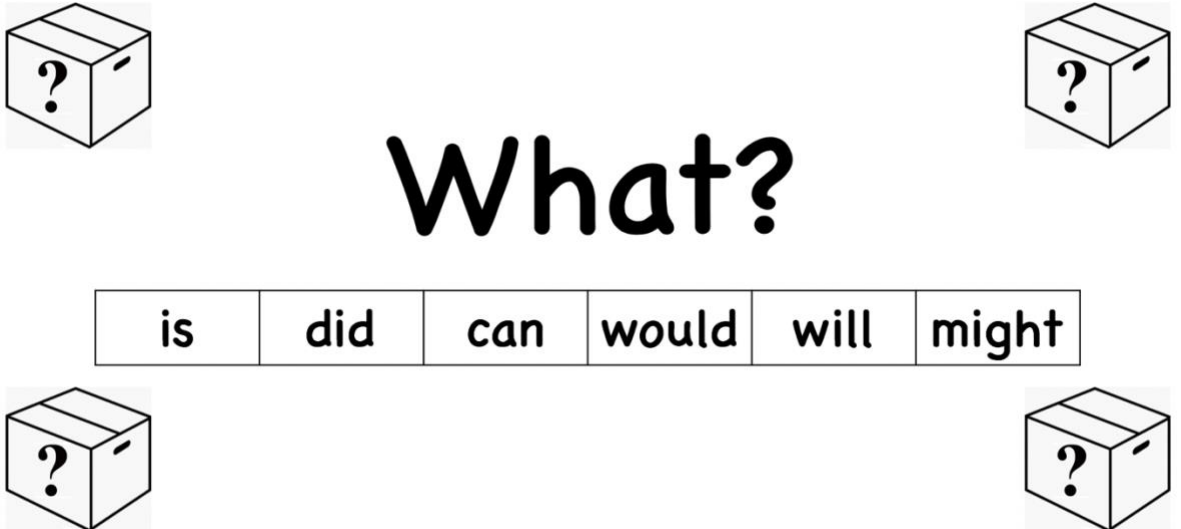
Here are some helpful suggestions for using read aloud:

- Read both narrative and informational text.
- Introduce a variety of genres.
- Plan the read aloud – select vocabulary words and plan discussion questions.
- Plan multiple readings; the first reading should have minimal interruptions.
- Preview and practice before sharing with children.
- During the rereading of text, encourage student discourse around prior knowledge, text features, vocabulary, phrases, and inferences needed to build comprehension.
- Practice finding pronoun antecedents and referents (e.g., Tom went to the store without his money. When I read, “his money”, I have to remember that it is Tom’s money.)
- Allow ample time and adjust your pace as you read.
- Make sure students can see the text and any illustrations as you read.
- Read in your own style with punctuated expression and prosody.
- Connect with the students frequently.
- Make the book available to students for rereading independently.





Who?

is	did	can	would	will	might
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What?

is	did	can	would	will	might
----	-----	-----	-------	------	-------





Where?



is	did	can	would	will	might
----	-----	-----	-------	------	-------



When?





is	did	can	would	will	might
----	-----	-----	-------	------	-------







Why?

is	did	can	would	will	might
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How?

is	did	can	would	will	might
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Discussion Cards



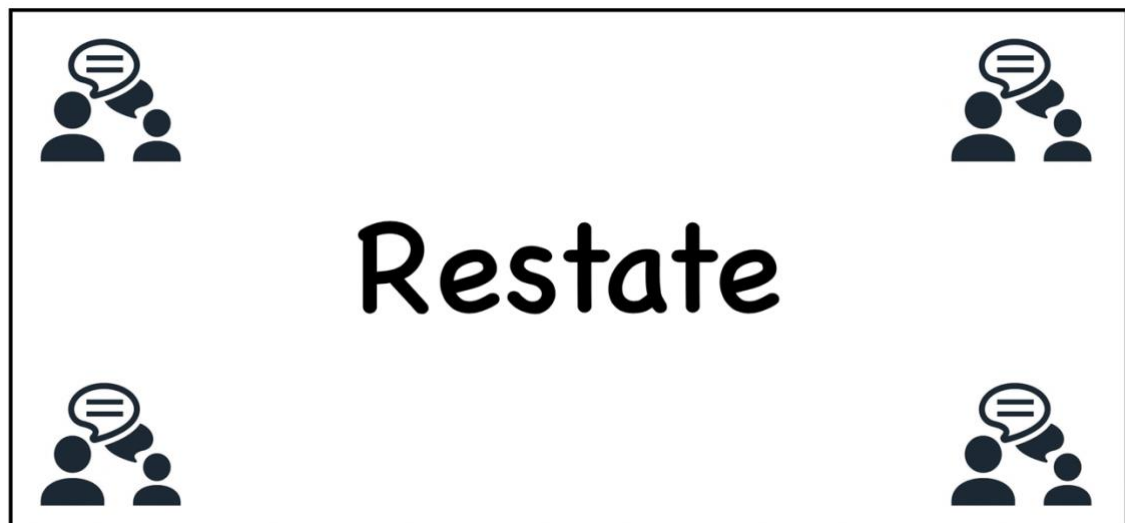
Statement

This card features the word "Statement" in a large, bold, black font centered on a white background. It is framed by a black border. In each of the four corners, there is a black silhouette of a person's head in profile, facing right, with three curved lines behind it representing sound waves or breath.



Question

This card features the word "Question" in a large, bold, black font centered on a white background. It is framed by a black border. In each of the four corners, there is a large, bold, black question mark.



Restate

This card features the word "Restate" in a large, bold, black font centered on a white background. It is framed by a black border. In each of the four corners, there is a black icon of three stylized human figures (two in front, one behind) with a speech bubble above them, containing three horizontal lines.