

# What is the current thought on literacy?

Reading for pleasure and reading for analysis

Communication in lessons

Marking to have impact

OFSTED: Although teachers planned opportunities for pupils to practise speaking, they rarely taught the skills of speaking effectively in an explicit way.

OFSTED: It is reasonable to expect repeated errors to be identified as targets for improvement and followed up by explicit teaching in all subjects.

In groups, discuss the following questions:

What do we consider to be good communication skills?

How can we explicitly develop students' communication skills in lessons?

How do we mark to ensure that students make improvement in their written literacy?

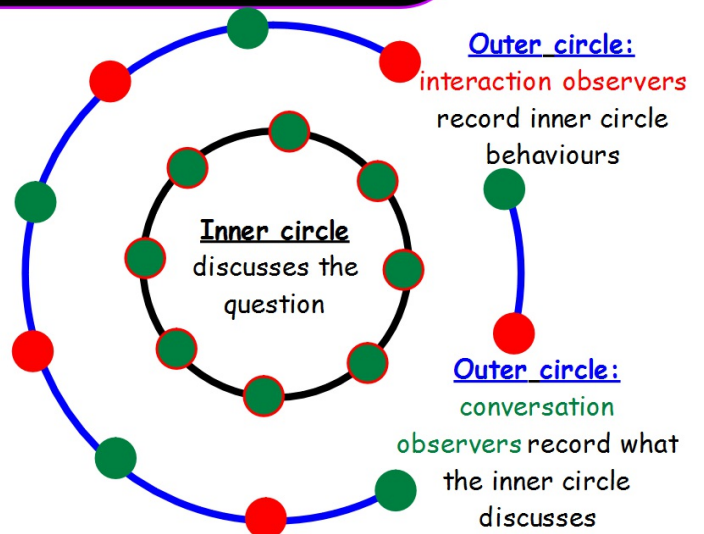
On your card is a specific communication focus. As your group discusses these two questions, note how many times you see this focus occurring.



### Socratic discussion

Focus on the content and the way it is discussed, through:

- dynamic of the discussion (group assessing group)
- individual communication skills (peer / self -assessment)



### Key points:

- make expectations clear before starting
- make each group responsible for answering a key question (2nd = harder)
- give outer circle specific things to look for (mini-whiteboards to take notes)
- use the discussion to develop ideas for an extended writing task to follow

## Socratic discussion: group dynamic & content of discussion

<b>Listening skills</b> How can you tell that members of the group are listening to one another?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does their body language tell you anything? What do you notice about their non-verbal communication?</li> <li>Do the points they are making refer back, or build on, points already made?</li> <li>Do they acknowledge other people's points with their language (e.g. "I understand your point about...", "I agree with _____ on the whole, but...")?</li> <li>How often do they use each other's names?</li> </ul>
<b>Main points of the discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the main points of the discussion? *Does one point build on the previous point?</li> <li>What is the conclusion of the discussion?</li> <li>What are the main points each 'side' of the discussion? *How are any contradictions handled by the group?</li> <li>Which of the points are the most powerful/well-argued in your opinion?</li> </ul>
<b>Use of questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many yes/no or other closed questions are used in the discussion?</li> <li>How many open questions (how, why) are used in the discussion?</li> <li>What impact does each type of question have? Which adds most to the discussion, and why?</li> <li>Which, in your opinion, is the best question that's been asked in this discussion? Why?</li> </ul>
<b>Group dynamics</b> How do the group dynamics develop?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does a leader or leaders emerge?</li> <li>To what extent does the whole group contribute?</li> <li>Can you identify any speakers who seem to take on particular roles, such as summing up or refocusing everyone's attention?</li> <li>In what way does the group bring the discussion to a close?</li> </ul>
<b>Gender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How often do boys speak? How often do girls speak?</li> <li>Are there any interruptions? Are they made by boys or girls?</li> <li>Who are the top three speakers who speak for the longest time without being interrupted?</li> <li>How many questions do boys ask? How many questions to girls ask?</li> <li>How many statements do boys make? How many statements do girls make?</li> </ul>



<b>Individual observation</b> You are watching the contribution of a certain member of the inner circle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How often do they speak, and when do they join in the conversation?</li> <li>How well do they develop the discussion, or take it in another direction?</li> <li>Do they use formal English/finish their sentences/get interrupted?</li> <li>Do they ask questions, and if so, are they open or closed?</li> <li>How well do they demonstrate good listening skills?</li> </ul>
<b>Literary/technical language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How often, and by whom, are literary terms used? Listen for: metaphor, simile, imagery, rhyme, rhythm, tone, adverbs, personification, alliteration, structure, narrator, audience, purpose</li> <li>How often, and by whom, are the keywords of the lesson/topic used?</li> </ul>
<b>Use of evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How often is the author's/poet's/playwright's name mentioned? Is it used correctly (i.e. first name + surname, or surname only)?</li> <li>How often are words from the text used to support points?</li> <li>How often are the ideas of the text discussed and brought in to the conversation?</li> <li>Are there any missed opportunities to make reference to the text?</li> </ul>

## Socratic discussion: peer/self-assessment

### Individual - individual: assessment pairs

<b>Individual observation</b> You are watching the contribution of a certain member of the inner circle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How often do they speak, and when do they join in the conversation?</li> <li>How well do they develop the discussion, or take it in another direction?</li> <li>Do they use formal English/finish their sentences/get interrupted?</li> <li>Do they ask questions, and if so, are they open or closed?</li> <li>How well do they demonstrate good listening skills?</li> </ul>
---	---



### Communication Literacy Skills: Evaluation

Tick if you see or hear this being demonstrated...	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Echoing of other people's language
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nodding/ smiling/ reacting with facial expressions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of agreement signals (e.g. 'Uh-huh', 'Mmm...')
<input type="checkbox"/>	Giving praise to others ('That's a great idea.')
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tracking the person speaking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Making eye-contact with the person speaking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of 'good discussion' sentence starters (e.g. 'I agree, but...')
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sitting up and looking attentive
<input type="checkbox"/>	Correct use of keywords
<input type="checkbox"/>	Open questions to develop the conversation (e.g. 'So how does that make you think of...?')
<input type="checkbox"/>	Questions which help clarify other people's ideas

### Self-Assessment: Socratic Discussion

R/A/G	How well did you do in the following areas?
■ ■ ■	<b>Communication:</b> Did you contributing to the discussion, using conversation movers to shape and develop the discussion?
■ ■ ■	<b>Text:</b> Did you using the central text actively in the discussion? Did you use evidence?
■ ■ ■	<b>Outside Connection:</b> Did you make links to other texts, movies, activities, and topics?
■ ■ ■	<b>Personal Connection:</b> Did you respond on a personal level and include this in your approach?
■ ■ ■	<b>New Ideas:</b> Did you connect ideas from different parts of the conversation, coming up with new interpretations?
■ ■ ■	<b>Clarifying:</b> Are you asking questions, clarifying ideas for the group, or challenging ideas?

Personal target:

# Communication strategies

Communication Literacy Skills: E

<input type="checkbox"/>	Tick if you see or hear this being demonstrated
<input type="checkbox"/>	Echoing of other people's language
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nodding/ smiling/ reacting with facial expressions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of agreement signals (e.g. 'Uh-huh')
<input type="checkbox"/>	Giving praise to others ('That's a good point')
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tracking the person speaking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Making eye-contact with the person speaking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of 'good discussion' sentence starters (e.g. 'I agree, but...')
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sitting up and looking attentive
<input type="checkbox"/>	Correct use of keywords
<input type="checkbox"/>	Open questions to discuss how does that make sense?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Questions which...

**Spies/observers** for group discussion activities

**Pose and polish:** students pass an answer on and polish it

Students **lead class feedback** and question others

**Modelling of a good discussion,** role-playing a conversation before group work

Insist students give **developed answers** (**full sentences** and 'because', or SRE: statement, reason, explanation)

**Drawing attention to good** expression of ideas during feedback



**Pose, pause, bounce, pounce** - encourage reflection on communication as well as content

No hands up '**adult**' conversation - builds on socratic discussion skills

**Paired writing** to answer a key question, focusing on clarity

Wall displays

May I elaborate on that point?	Right, but have you considered...	And adding to that point...	We also need to consider...
I disagree because...	While I see the merit in that point, I think...	Good discussions need good thinking.	A good discussion sounds like...
Yes, but on the other hand...	Have you ever considered...?	I find it really interesting that...	It could be argued that... However, I believe...

## Prompts for a good discussion

<p><b>To Agree</b></p> <p>Most will agree that... I agree with those who suggest that... Interesting point! I think that... I also believe... because... A sensible idea would be to... The fact is that... Surely, you would agree that... Naturally, I feel that... I have to concede that...</p>	<p><b>To Disagree</b></p> <p>I understand your point, but perhaps we should consider... I would argue that... While that may be... Interesting point... That is pro... Many claim... Despite the opin...</p>
<p><b>To Make Connections</b></p> <p>What you said reminds me of... Your ideas are related to... X is similar to Y because... Based on what we know about X, I think... The two ideas are related in that they...</p>	<p><b>To Give Examples</b></p> <p>Generally speaking... As a rule... In my experience... It is common knowledge that... Many assume that X is true... The reality is that...</p>

## Prompts for a good discussion

<p><b>To Ask for Explanations</b></p> <p>Can you explain why... Do you mean to say that... Could you help me understand more... ...but... ...elaborate on... ...is mean... ...more information on...</p>	<p><b>To Make Exceptions</b></p> <p>There are exceptions to the rule... One exception is... That may be true, but... In reality, however... But the fact of the matter is... Let's not forget... While many suggest X, others say Y...</p>
<p><b>To Give Examples (make clear)</b></p> <p>...saying to say is... In other words... To put it differently... I would like to rephrase that in... Simply put... What I mean to say is... Just to make it clearer...</p>	<p><b>To Ask for Clarification</b></p> <p>What you mean is... If I understand you, you're saying that... So, you think (that)... So, your idea is that... Could you re-phrase that please? What are your reasons for...?</p>

Key phrase mats

# Marking strategies

Students write down misspelt words in **planner**

**Green pen** marking

Use literacy stickers

**Explicit teaching** of the marking codes/symbols

**Modelling correct usage** of subject-specific keywords

Find common mistakes made by the whole class and include in **success criteria**

**Connects:** students peer-assess each other's spelling

**Redrafting** an assessed piece of work, focusing on literacy errors and subject-specific targets

Connect activity **actively** responding to marking - explain how to respond to each code

**Paired writing** to answer a key question, focusing on literacy

**Apostrophe not needed!**  
Don't use apostrophes for plurals

**their** = ownership  
e.g. Their pens are in their bags  
**they're** = they are  
e.g. They're in lessons now.  
**there** = a place  
e.g. The students are over there.

**Use an apostrophe:**  
- if something **belongs** to a person or place e.g. Ahmed's home  
- if you **contract** two words into one e.g. It is = it's