

Speaking and Listening

Research Basis: Research shows that students have few opportunities to engage in meaningful academic conversations in school and that speaking is the neglected skill. For learning to take place, we need to shift from the teacher delivering all the instruction to having lessons built around academic discussion with increased productive student talk. (Cazden, 1988, 2001).

Speaking and Listening Routine 1

Partner Discussions

Purpose: Support students in making effective and successful use of partner discussion time.

- 1. Provide a discussion topic** and assign partners.
- 2. Monitor discussions.** Partners should:
 - Restate the purpose.
 - Begin the conversation. One partner initiates by asking the other.
What do you think about _____?
 - Take turns and build on one another's ideas.
That's a good idea. I also think _____.
Explain more about _____.
I have a different idea. I think _____.
 - Ask questions and clarify ideas that are not clear.
Let's explore that idea. Do you think _____?
 - Summarize what they discussed.
One (idea/point) we discussed was _____.
- 3. Regroup.** Bring the class back together. Call on a few students to share what they discussed with their partners.

See also:

- Cooperative learning structures, pages BP15–BP16: Think, Pair, Share; Inside-Outside Circle; Three-Step Interview
- Academic Talk flip chart



Speaking and Listening Routine 2

Group Conversations

Purpose: To ensure that everyone in the group conversation has a part to play.

- 1. Form groups.** Provide a discussion topic.
- 2. Assign roles and monitor discussions.** Be sure to vary the roles in discussions throughout the year so that all students have a turn assuming each role. Encourage students to follow a process.
 - The **facilitator** restates the purpose and begins the conversation.
We're talking about _____.
Our topic is _____. Does anyone have any ideas?
 - All members take turns and build on one another's ideas.
_____ has a good idea. I also think _____.
Not only _____, but _____.
 - The **facilitator** ensures that no one dominates the conversation.
_____, let's let someone else speak.
 - The **encourager** praises participators and encourages those who are not talking as much.
_____ could you share some of your ideas about _____?
What do you think, _____?
 - Everyone asks questions and clarifies ideas that are not clear.
What do you mean by _____?
 - The **time keeper** lets the group know when there are five minutes left.
 - The **note taker** summarizes what the group discussed.
- 3. Regroup.** Bring the class back together. Call on a few note takers to share what their groups discussed.

See also:

- Cooperative learning structures, pages BP15–BP16: Corners, Fishbowl, Jigsaw, Roundtable
- Academic Talk flip chart



Speaking and Listening Routine 3

Presentations

Purpose: To support students in making effective, successful presentations and to ensure that listeners participate actively.

1. Provide practice time. Allow time for students to practice their presentations with partners.

Monitor practice to ensure students:

- Speak clearly.
- Pronounce important words correctly.
- Choose formal language that suits the audience, task, and purpose.
- Make good eye contact.
- Use gestures as appropriate.

2. Monitor presentations. Speakers should:

- Set up the multimedia part of their presentation. They can choose from graphics, sound recordings, and visual displays as needed to support the main ideas.

- Introduce their presentation.

My/Our presentation is about _____.

I/We chose this topic because _____.

- Tell the audience what they will see or hear.

You are going to see/hear _____.

I/We will show you _____.

- Set a purpose for the audience (if applicable).

Listen for _____.

See if you understand why _____.

- State the main idea of their presentation.

In this presentation, I/we plan to (explain/discuss/compare) _____.

- Explain the material, using transitions words effectively.

First, _____.

Next, _____.

Finally, _____.

However, _____.

In addition, _____.

Therefore, _____.

- Conclude their presentation and restate the main idea.

In conclusion, _____.

I/We hope you have an idea about _____.

- Thank the audience and ask for questions.

Thank you for your time.

Do you have any questions about _____?



3. Prompt the audience. Listeners should:

- Listen attentively.
- Jot down key words to remember main ideas.
- Make eye contact with the speaker. Smile or nod to show they are listening attentively.
- Try to understand the message.
- Ask questions if they don't understand something.

What does _____ mean?

Could you explain _____ again?

4. Conclude. Follow up with a brief, whole-class discussion of the presentation. Ask the audience to summarize the main ideas presented and explain if and how they are supported by reasons and/or evidence.

See also:

- Academic Talk flip chart

