

# LYFTA ORACY TOOLKIT

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## TOOLKIT BRIEF

This document provides a succinct overview of advice and activities to structure high quality oracy activities in your classroom with Lyfta.

It aims to support discussion activities in Lyfta lesson plans by giving you an array of strategies and best practice to try in class.

The activities in this resource are adapted from resources developed by [Voice 21](#) to help young people become successful, confident communicators.

## HOW LYFTA SUPPORTS ORACY

At its core Lyfta is about connection. Storyworlds transport students to places and encourage them to be curious about what they are noticing, to ask questions about the people they meet, and to empathise with the perspectives shared.

These experiences are rich stimuli for discussion, both structured and unstructured talk, as well as presenting opportunities for every student in the class to find their voice.



Students from Spring learning trust utilising oracy activities in their Lyfta lessons

All of Lyfta’s lesson plans have discussion activities within them, which range in challenge from exploring new spaces and sharing questions, to debating and speech writing.

As a result, each Lyfta session presents opportunities to develop strong oracy practice; to try different groupings, activities, and success criteria around talk with engaging stimuli to support discussion.

## DISCUSSION GUIDELINES: CREATING SHARED EXPECTATIONS FOR TALK

At the beginning of your oracy journey, it is useful for your pupils to develop a set of class discussion guidelines to set expectations.

Once they have shared their own conventions of a good discussion, they can regulate and reflect on the ones they have, leading to more productive speaking, listening and deeper thinking.

These guidelines can be a permanent fixture reflected on throughout the year.



Voice 21s' discussion guidelines example

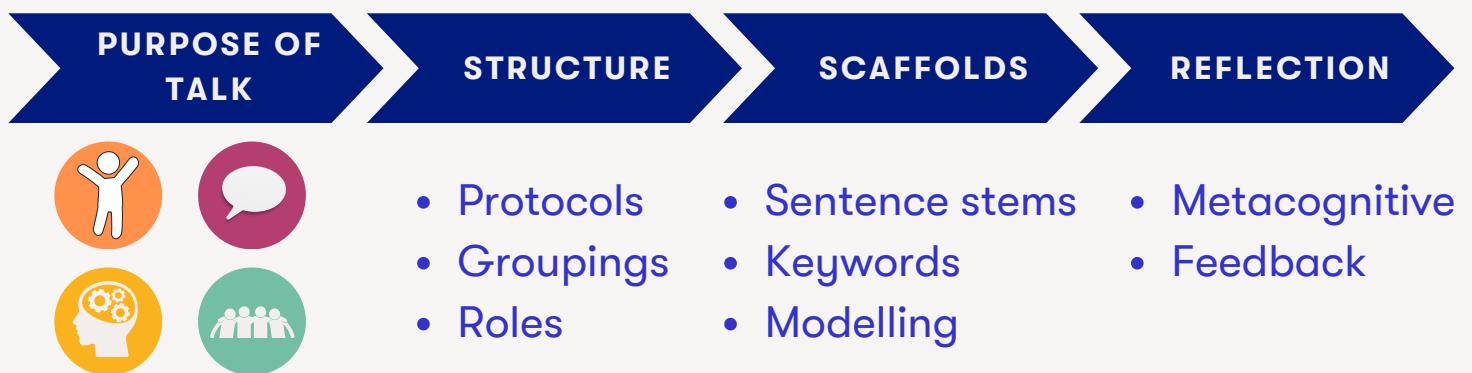
One approach to creating these guidelines is to set up a role-play or create a short film with other adults or students to show a particularly poor discussion.

Ask your pupils to think about how the progress and outcomes of this discussion could be improved by creating a set of guidelines.

You could ask students to finish the sentence “in a high quality discussion...”, and then narrow these down to 5 or 6 guidelines that everyone agrees with.

## Steps to planning a rich talk task

These four sections are explored in further detail below, they provide a structure to designing effective oracy tasks in your lessons.



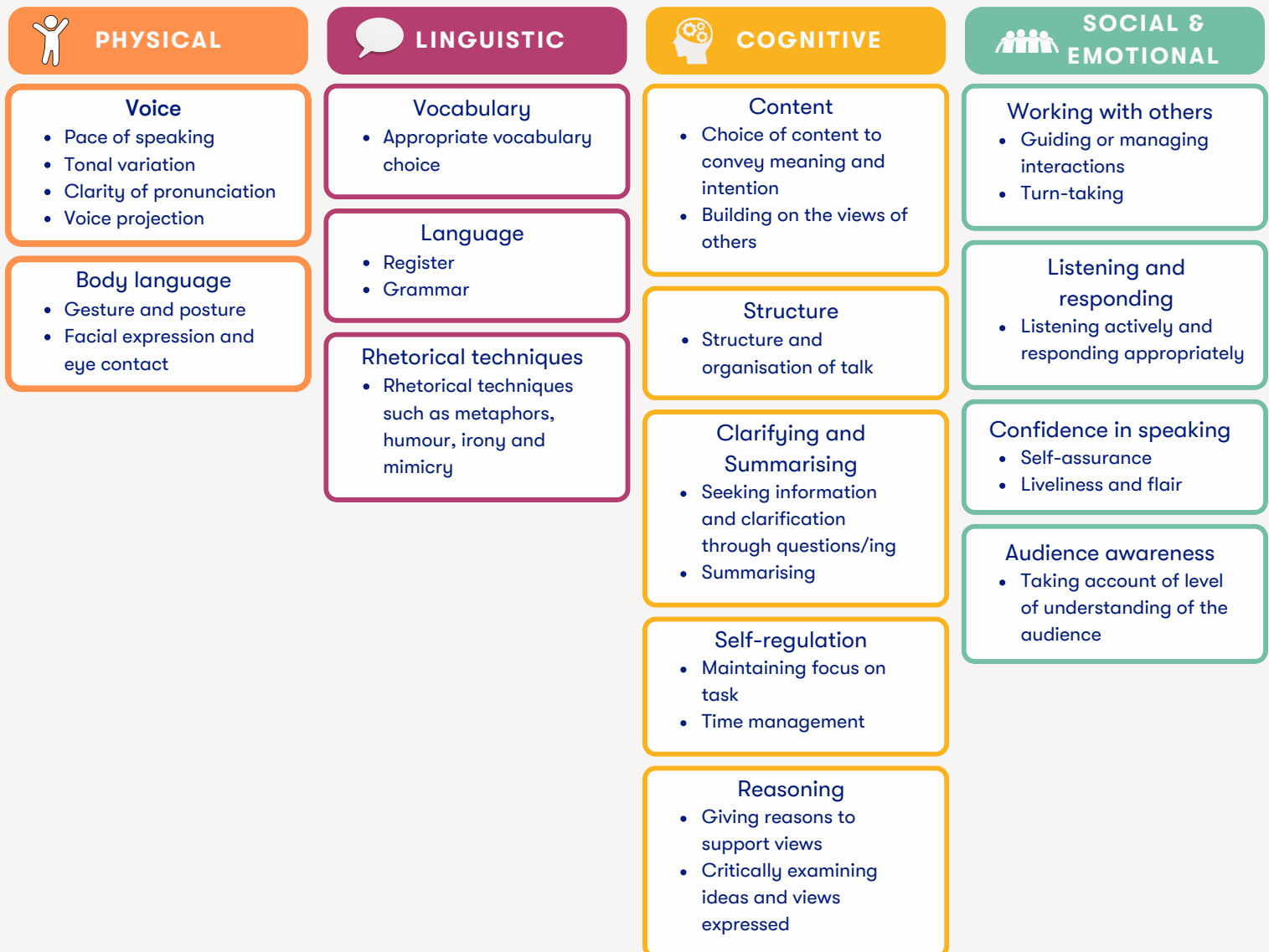
## Oracy success criteria: what are we working on?

Just as we break down writing and source analysis skills, we can also break down communication skills and practise them individually.

By sharing key areas of focus in speaking, modelling effective communication, and reflecting on talk success criteria, we support students to becoming become better communicators.

What we want to focus on can be grouped into four oracy strands:

- Physical
- Linguistic
- Cognitive
- Social & emotional





## Groupings: what will work best for the discussion task?

Different activities work better with different groupings of students, depending on the task and the goals we are trying to achieve.

For example, it may be that we want to give students the opportunity to talk to lots of different people efficiently (traverse), or that we want one student listening to a discussion, offering feedback and summarising back to the group (trios).

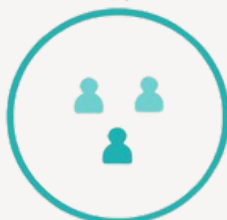
By engaging in discussions with various groupings and focuses, students are exposed to different types of conversations, which helps to stretch and develop their discussion skills.

### Groupings

Different groupings support different types of talk

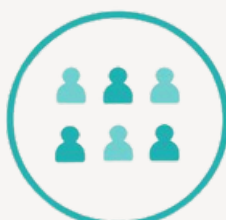
#### Trios

Talk with two other people. Alternatively, talk to a partner while a third person listens in and summarises or critiques the discussion. Or two people talk and the third listens in to summarise and critique the discussion.



#### Traverse

Stand in two parallel lines opposite a partner. Change partners by moving one person down to the other end of the line.



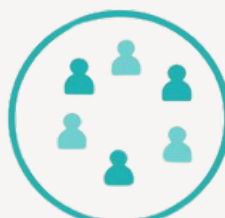
#### Pair

Talk to a partner



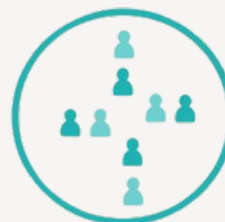
#### Circle

Groups of six or more people face each other in a circle. You can step inside the circle, one at a time, to speak to the whole group.



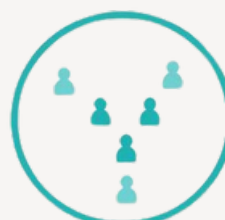
#### Fishbowl

Similar to an onion, but the people in the inner circle face each other while the people on the outer circle observe the inner circle's discussion.



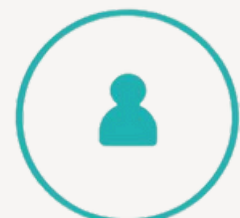
#### Onion

Form an inner circle and an outer circle. If you're in the inner circle stand back to back, facing a partner on the outer circle. Speak to a new partner by rotating the inner or outer circle.



#### Nest

Stand apart from each other and whisper your ideas to yourself



Voice 21s' different groupings examples

## EXPLORING STORYWORLDS: QUESTIONS AND SENTENCE STEMS

A core component of any Lyfta lesson is immersing in new locations, looking around new places that are important to the story, and taking in the sights and sounds of that place. This is the opportunity for everyone to infer, predict, be curious and share prior knowledge.

The strategies below can be combined with different groupings or success criteria above. We always encourage colleagues to slow down whilst exploring storyworlds, give students ample time to really imagine what it would be like to be inside the scene and to share their ideas and feelings.

To encourage this, sentence stems can be shared.

For example:

- “I would like to know...”
- “I am wondering...”
- “This reminds me of...”
- “I notice...”
- “I predict...”



Jasmin from ‘Home Wasn’t Built In A Day’

We can also encourage students to build upon or challenge each others ideas in order to develop a stronger dialogue in class:

- “When you said... It made me think...”
- “My thoughts on that are...because...”
- “Have you considered...?”



## DISCUSSION TASKS IN LYFTA LESSONS

More in-depth discussion tasks and questions provide an opportunity to hone in and develop the different strands and skills of oracy. Here are a selection of activities that can be utilised alongside the strategies outlined above.

Remember, it may not work perfectly at first, but as students become increasingly familiar with the scaffolds, structure, and activities it will become smoother and require less and less modelling from you. Remind students of their guidelines and success criteria in order to provide praise and feedback.

### Activity idea 1: discussion statements

A quick win for encouraging deeper discussion is rewording questions as statements and providing sentence stems to encourage reasoning, the more provocative the better!

QUESTION	STATEMENT
What will be the negative impact of AI on society?	AI will cause more harm than good in society by increasing unemployment and social divide.
Who's responsibility is it to clean up beaches?	It is Rob's responsibility to clean the beach.
In 'beekeeper's garden' how does Malte's life change when he changes careers?	Malte should have kept his 'big city' career as it would be more lucrative.


By offering contentious statements we encourage more emotions and opinions, in turn creating more of a discussion amongst students, working towards avoiding a back and forth between teacher and class. This can be further encouraged by using the talk roles below.

## Activity idea 2: talk roles

These offer another approach to promote diverse and often more profound conversations among students by encouraging them to consider distinct roles during discussions.







By adopting these roles, students may be prompted to present arguments and ideas that differ from their own beliefs or delve deeper into various perspectives than they might typically engage with.

It's advisable to introduce these roles gradually, one or two at a time, accompanied by practice and supportive sentence stems (note: these should be differentiated for your class).



Voice 21

### Talking Roles

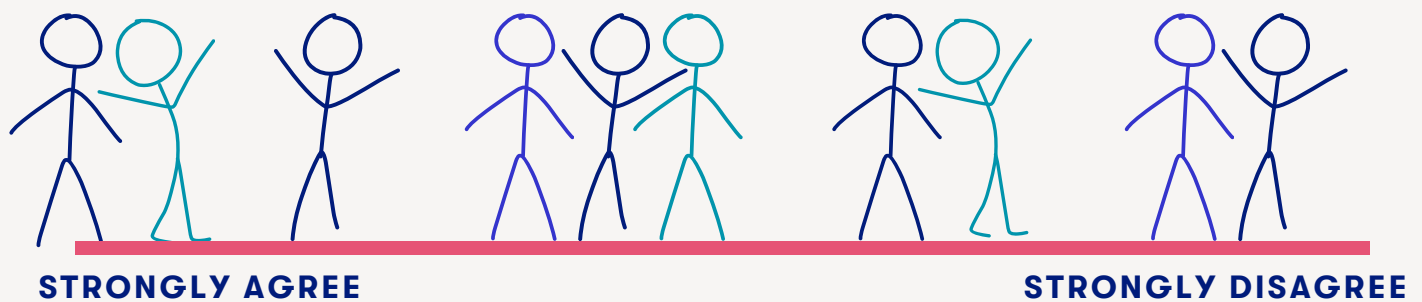
 <p><b>Instigator</b> The person who starts the discussion <b>Will say:</b> "I would like to start by saying..." "I think the first thing we should consider is..." "To begin with let's talk about..."</p>	 <p><b>Builder</b> Develops, adds to or runs with an idea <b>Will say:</b> "I agree and I'd like to add..." "Linking to your point..." "Building on that idea..."</p>	 <p><b>Challenger</b> Disagrees with or presents an alternative argument <b>Will say:</b> "That's true, but have you considered..." "You mentioned X but what about..." "I hear what you're saying, but..."</p>
 <p><b>Clarifier</b> Makes things clearer and simplifies ideas by asking questions <b>Will say:</b> "What do you mean when you say..." "Could you tell me more about..." "Does that mean that..."</p>	 <p><b>Prober</b> Digs deeper into the argument, asks for evidence or justification of ideas <b>Will say:</b> "What evidence do you have to support that?" "How does that support your argument?" "How did you come to that conclusion?"</p>	 <p><b>Summariser</b> Presents reflections on the discussion. May offer a conclusion or balanced assessment of the main points <b>Will say:</b> "Overall, the main points covered were..." "In summary..." "From today's discussion, it's clear that..."</p>

Voice 21s examples of different talk roles

## Activity idea 3: opinion lines

A great way to make opinions visible is by asking students to position themselves along an imaginary line that reflects their views. As the discussion unfolds and participants articulate their reasoning, students are welcome to move position on the line.

Encouraging students to consider their shifts in perspective fosters empathy, demonstrating that it's okay not to be rigid in our initial opinions. As we acquire more information and insights on a topic, our original viewpoints may evolve.



## Activity idea 4: shared agreements

A ‘no resource’ activity to practise compromise, and develop longer discussions is to challenge a group of students to come up with a shared agreement during their talk tasks.

All students must agree on a final group opinion as a jury would, despite it potentially not fully aligning with their own. This works best with discussion tasks (or statements!) you know will divide opinions, but once students are used to this expectation it can frequently bring about differing viewpoints that must be unpicked. “Is this a shared agreement between you all, X you don’t look too convinced...!”

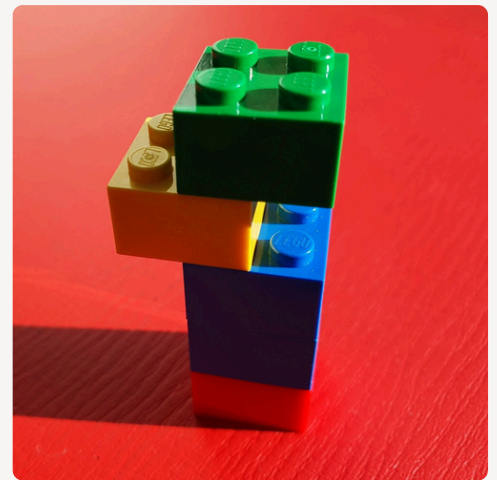
## MAKING TALK VISIBLE

As well as making our opinions visible we can make our talk itself visible. This can support everyone to find their voice and contribute, but also is a fantastic tool to encourage students to reflect upon their discussion both as a group and individually. Here are two examples:

### Activity idea 5: talking objects

Give each student 2-5 ‘tokens’ to ‘spend’ when they contribute to encourage additional thought before speaking.

Colours can be used to visualise different types of talk (building, clarifying etc) or the speaker. What kind of discussion could this LEGO tower represent?

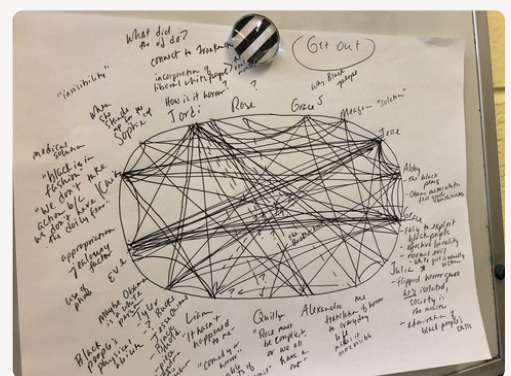


Talk tokens LEGO tower

### Activity idea 6: harkness discussions

We can ask one or more people to track the discussion with groups sat in a circle and physically draw where the discussion goes.

To make it more advanced, different colours could be used to represent different types of talk. Key points and arguments can also be noted as in the picture, however these notes could also be related to the key success criteria of the discussion, for example utilising key words or giving appropriate reasoning - similar to the agents of talk activity below. This map then serves as a tool for reflecting on the discussion.



Harkness discussion map

## REFLECTING ON TALK

A vital component of structured oracy tasks is allowing students sufficient time to reflect on their conversations.

They should critique their performance based on the skills they were practicing, evaluating what they excelled at and identifying areas for improvement.

Additionally, you can implement oracy tasks specifically aimed at fostering reflective practice.

The activities and strategies detailed in this document can also be applied during these reflective tasks, and a further popular one is outlined below.

### Activity idea 7: Talk ‘detectives’

This involves giving students the opportunity to assess their peers’ talk, providing additional focus on the purpose of talk.

Multiple students are given the task of looking for examples of high quality talk to share after discussion. They may be challenged to look for examples of talk, or specific success criteria.

A template is distributed to a few students to support them in identifying good talk.

At the end of the discussion, the ‘agents’ feedback what they heard and celebrate high quality discussion.

An example template for this activity is below, but this would be adapted to the talk task.





## TALK DETECTIVES

Mystery to solve: What does good oracy look like?

PERSON/GROUP NAME	
Invited someone else to contribute	
Challenged a group member	
Summarised a group member's ideas	
Clarified somebody's ideas in their group	

## UTILISING THESE ACTIVITIES IN YOUR LYFTA LESSONS

All Lyfta lessons have discussion activities that can be extended from pair talk/whole class discussions into more intentional oracy tasks.

The activities you incorporate will be dependent on your class and where you are on your Lyfta and oracy journey. Please do bare in mind this helpful planning sequence below!

We also have a series of debating lesson plans that cycle through the activities outlined in this toolkit. Simply search ‘Lyfta debate’.

We hope that these activities support you in bringing feelings of connection, understanding and belonging within your classroom.

If you’d like to discuss oracy & Lyfta for your school in more detail, reach out to us: [info@lyfta.com](mailto:info@lyfta.com).

