

Collective Writing

A creative group exercise where one student is appointed the scribe and anyone can contribute



Generate Ideas
Analyse and
Evaluate



3+
students



20-40mins

Skills outcomes



To work as part of a group work and manage interactions.



Active listening.



To explore and evaluate ideas and to reflect on them.



To acquire new vocabulary.

Exercise

1. Students should be arranged in a circle
2. Appoint a scribe before the exercise begins and make sure they have a pen and paper to note down other students' ideas.
3. Give students five minutes to write down their own ideas first before they share with the group.
4. Students share their ideas with the group in turn, the scribe notes down each idea (10 mins). Encourage students to suggest alternatives
5. Once all the ideas have been collected the scribe reads them back to the group to edit and restructure the piece.

Extensions

- Students could reflect on and redraft the piece they collectively created, or swap with another group to give feedback.
- Students could be given certain words or types of words (e.g. adverbs) to use in their writing.
- Time could be allocated to reflect on the exercise as a whole and how well the group worked together (using the reflections protocol)

Talking Points

Talking points are statements which could be factually accurate, incorrect or controversial, and are used to stimulate discussion. E.g. 'School is pointless', 'Disney princesses are good role models', 'Henry VIII was an excellent monarch'.

They were developed by Lyn Dawes.



Generate Ideas
Analyse and Evaluate
Reach a consensus



2+
students



5 -15mins

Skills outcomes



To take turns and manage interactions.



To build on and challenge each other's ideas.
To reach a consensus.

Exercise

1. Pupils are arranged in small groups (2 to 5 students).
2. Sentence stems may be shared in order to scaffold the discussion.
3. Display the talking point on the board. Sometimes it is effective if a number of talking points are displayed, pupils can then select the one that interests them most.
4. Pupils are encouraged to come to a 'shared agreement', deciding whether their group agrees or disagrees with the statement and why.

Extensions

- A 'summariser' from each group feeds back from their discussion to the group as a whole.

Philosophy for Children

During a P4C session pupils develop their own philosophical questions based on a stimulus. They then choose one question which forms the basis of a philosophical enquiry or dialogue.

More information can be found online at p4c.com or philosophy4children.co.uk



Generate Ideas
Analyse and
Evaluate



6+
students



45+ mins

Skills outcomes



To take turns and manage interactions.



To show active listening through body language.



To develop reasoning and questioning skills.

Exercise

1. Pupils are arranged in a circle.
2. After a quick warm up, they are presented with a stimulus.
3. Pupils work in pairs or trios to generate a 'philosophical' question about the stimulus e.g. 'Is it always wrong to steal?'
4. Pupils share their questions and the group decides on which one to discuss.
5. A discussion or enquiry takes place about the question, guided by a facilitator who supports children in their thinking.
6. Pupils share any final thoughts about the question and reflect on the quality of dialogue.

Extensions

- Send the enquiry question home so pupils can continue their discussion with their friends and families.

Presentation

A presentation allows students the opportunity to share information with an audience. In contrast to a discussion, a presentation is a 'final draft' with thoughts offered out to others for evaluation and display.



Share
information



1+
students



Flexible -
suggestions in
exercise

Skills outcomes



To make an impact on an audience.



To use expression and gestures.



To structure and develop the presentation.



To choose vocabulary according to purpose
and register appropriate to context.

Exercise

1. Pupils are given time in advance to prepare a presentation on a given topic or theme. If working in groups, you may want to allocate individual roles such as researcher, resource manager, design lead and script writing lead. Depending on the nature of the subject matter, pupils are likely to need an hour or more to prepare thoroughly.
2. Ensure pupils are aware of the four strands and how these can support them in the delivery of their presentation. As a class decide how long each presentation should last. You may also want to create a structure each presentation can use as a scaffold and highlight key vocabulary to students.
3. Explicitly discuss the audience of the presentation with pupils so they can tailor their presentation accordingly. Try to ensure the audience is authentic, i.e. if their presentations are meant to be a demonstration of expert scientific knowledge to fellow scientists, invite some experts from outside of school to give feedback.
4. Carefully consider where this activity comes in the sequence of teaching. Before presenting their knowledge or ideas to others, pupils should have ample opportunity to grapple with new ideas independently or through discussion.

Extensions

- Ask pupils to evaluate their own or each other's presentations against the four strands.

Would You Rather

This is a quick and fun way to get pupils using the language of justification.



2+
students



5 -15 mins

Skills outcomes

Acquire language
Structure ideas
Analyse and Evaluate



To challenge and build on each other's ideas.



To use the language of justification e.g.
'because', 'so', 'therefore'.

Exercise

1. Introduce a 'Would you rather?' question, often the sillier the better! E.g. 'Would you rather have a flying carpet that would take you anywhere or a never ending bag of sweets?' or 'Would you rather have a giraffe or a lion as a pet?'
2. For older students, your 'Would you rather?' could introduce complex ethical dilemmas. E.g. 'Would you rather take a DNA test which could tell you if you carried a genetic disease, or live your life never knowing?'
3. Introduce pupils to sentence stems to scaffold their contributions.

Extensions

- Challenge pupils to come up with their own 'Would you rather?' questions for each other specific to the topic being taught.

Odd One Out

Odd one out is a great stimulus for a lively small group or whole-class discussion, particularly when the 'odd one out' is not obvious or up for debate.



2+

students



5 -15 mins

Skills outcomes

Analyse and Evaluate
Acquire new vocabulary



To justify ideas, and build on and challenge others' ideas.



To use target vocabulary.

Exercise

1. Share three or four items, words, numbers, pictures or statements with pupils. Pupils must explain in pairs or trios which one is the odd one out and why. For the most successful discussions, there will be at least one reason why each item is arguably the odd one out.
2. Sentence stems can be used to scaffold pupils' ideas or target vocabulary given. E.g. in a Maths lesson looking at four different graphs to identify the odd one out could be given target vocabulary such as: turning point, inflection point, root, y-intercept, and symmetry (rotational and reflectional) to use in their answers.
3. When pupils feedback their thoughts to the group, encourage them to build on or challenge each other's ideas.

Extensions

- Challenge pupils to come to a shared agreement about which is the odd one out.
- Pupils can develop their own odd one outs for each other to discuss. This is particularly challenging as pupils must understand that the odd one out must not be obvious in order to generate discussion.

Zone of Relevance

A Zone of Relevance is a fun way to generate ideas as a group and reach a consensus about which one is most valid or appropriate. It can also be used to support pupils in summarising information.



Reach a consensus
Analyse and Evaluate



3+
students



10 -15mins

Skills outcomes



To take turns and show active listening.



To prioritise and evaluate ideas.

Exercise

1. Draw a bullseye with four concentric rings on large sugar paper. You will need one sheet for each group of students. Students should be in groups of three to six.
2. Pupils generate ideas on post-it notes around a given idea, theme or question. E.g. A character's feelings or personal traits, important factors in leading to a major event or actions that someone could take in response to a dilemma.
3. Pupils move relevant ideas into the outer rings. Through discussion, pupils decide which ideas to move into the inner rings, eventually moving the most valid or appropriate idea into the centre.
4. Provide pupils with sentence stems to aid their decision-making. E.g. 'I think that an important idea is ... because ...' 'I think ... is less important than ... because ...'

Extensions

- Pupils share their central idea, word or concept with other groups. Develop a whole-class zone of relevance to decide which of these is most valid or appropriate.

Photo Fit

This quick activity scaffolds students' use of new vocabulary through images.



Acquire new vocabulary



2 + students



5 - 10 mins

Skills outcomes



To take turns and show active listening.



To use new vocabulary in a number of different contexts.

Exercise

1. Gather 6-8 images which in some way show the word that is being learned. For example, if learning the word 'relieved' images might show a key in a door, a parent meeting a child, someone making a cake.
2. Spend some time teaching the new word to students - defining it and modelling its use sentences.
3. Lay the images out for students in groups of 2-6. When a student feels confident they have formed a sentence which uses the word, they pick up the image and tell their sentence to the group. For example, 'The man was relieved that the cake wasn't burnt'. Encourage students to help to correct or reformulate each other's sentences if they don't make sense.
4. The activity can either be competitive, with students collecting the images for the sentences they have mastered (this may require more than eight images), or require students to take turns.

Extensions

- Students could draw/create their own images for the word for each other to use in the next round.

Summary Bullseye

In this activity students are challenged to summarise a text/narrative/speech using target vocabulary.



2+

students



10 - 15 mins

Skills outcomes

Acquire new vocabulary
Understand
Analyse and Evaluate



To show active listening.



To prioritise and organise information and ideas.



To use new vocabulary.

Exercise

1. Introduce students to a text, concept or film which they will be summarising. This could be anything, from the plot of a novel which has been studied across the term to a detailed explanation of a scientific or geographic process, to an account of a historical event.
2. To prepare the resource, identify the keywords, dates or other information which are crucial to summarising the text.
3. Using a bullseye shape, display the vocabulary or information needed to summarise the text/concept. At the centre of the bullseye put the most difficult vocabulary, worth 5 points. In the outer rings add vocabulary which is less and less challenging, worth 4, 3, 2 and 1 points. Aim to have about three words in each ring.
4. Spend some time with students drawing up criteria for a good summary. For example: it only includes important information, it is logically sequenced (and doesn't 'jump around' between ideas), it isn't repetitive.
5. Students work in pairs. Student A gives a summary using as much of the vocabulary in the bullseye as possible. Student B listens and ticks off words used to record a score. Students then switch roles.
6. Points can be deducted for incorrect use of vocabulary, or for breaching any of the agreed criteria for a good summary.

Extensions

- Students could create for themselves or each other their own summary bullseyes, in doing so prioritising information they think is important to the topic.

De Bono's Hats

Edward de Bono's "Six Thinking Hats" are a tool for group discussion, which encourage pupils to think about an issue collaboratively and in different ways. Engaging in this process allows pupils to broaden their understanding of a complex issue and to generate ideas or solutions that they might not have done without such an exercise.



Generate Ideas
Analyse and
Evaluate



6+
students



20-40mins

Skills outcomes



To use a structure for dialogue that stimulates thoughts and ideas.

Exercise

1. Prior to starting this exercise you may want to get hold of six different coloured hats so that pupils can physically don a hat, and possibly swap hats in the course of the discussion.
2. Introduce pupils to each of the hats, which each represent a different mode of thinking. You may want to provide pupils with sentence starters for each hat. E.g. 'I think a potential risk is ...' 'I feel that ...' 'What about an alternative like ... ?'
3. Present pupils with an idea or issue. Either assign each group a thinking hat and encourage them to generate ideas or thoughts from this perspective, or assign individual students within a group a hat. E.g. if they have the yellow hat, they must only consider the benefits of an idea.
4. Feedback to the class and monitor how this affects the class' understanding or thoughts on a given issue.

Extensions

- Encourage students to reflect on the process. For instance, which hat came to them most naturally and which the least naturally and why this might be. Are certain hats more important or more useful than others?

Creating Analogies

Developing analogies or personification offers a way for students to explore key concepts.



Understand
Acquire new
vocabulary



3+
students



10 - 45 mins

Skills outcomes



To find parallels between subject matter and 'real life'.



To use analogies and personification in speech.

Exercise

1. Decide ahead of the lesson what the analogy will be based on. For example, if the teaching about institutions in society an analogy could be the body.
2. Scaffold students to apply their knowledge to a new context. For example, what part of the body would the prison system be? Perhaps the liver, as it clears out toxins.
3. Alternatively, you could ask students to use personification to create characters and justify their choices. E.g. What would a square be like as a person? What would happen if a full stop and a semi-colon were to meet in the street?

Yes, but ...

This exercise is a fun way to get students thinking about counter-arguments.



Challenge



2+
students



5- 10 mins

Skills outcomes



To practise coming up with quick-fire counter-arguments.

Exercise

1. Students should be in pairs.
2. Give students a situation. E.g. Student A, you are a school dinner lady who does not want to give out any more food. Student B, you are a student who thinks their portion is too small. Or, Student B, you are a shopkeeper who wants to close up for the night. Student A, you want to buy a pint of milk.
3. Give the first student to speak a sentence starter e.g. 'That's your lot' (school dinners example) or 'I'm closed, mate' (shop example). The other student has to respond, starting their sentence with 'Yes, but ...' to which the other student responds back, 'Yes, but ...'.
4. See how long students can keep up this back and forth! Move on to a new situation when all responses have been exhausted.

Choral Speaking

This exercise allows students to experiment with their voices, body language and vocabulary within the safety of being part of a larger group.



To acquire new vocabulary



6+ students



10 - 30 mins

Skills outcomes



To build confidence speaking as part of a larger group.



To practise using tone, volume, pace and gestures.



To rehearse phrases to use in later speech.

Exercise

1. Think about how you want to organise pupils - a circle or a traverse (two opposing lines) may be best.
2. Model for pupils line by line the text. Exaggerate the pace, volume, tone and gestures you use so that pupils can mirror them when they speak in unison. The text could be a poem, song or a set of phrases you want pupils to replicate in their own speech. E.g. prior to a debate you may want to equip them with phrases to rebut other's arguments such as 'Your side are yet to prove that ...!'
3. You may want to create smaller groups where pupils can experiment with a range of choral techniques such as repetition, echo and cannon.

Extensions

- Pupils can create their own piece of choral speaking through a process of drafting.

Take a Stand

Students are encouraged to think about their own opinions and why they hold them. This exercise can also be used to practise persuasive speaking.



Understand
Challenge
Influence



10+
students



10-15mins

Skills outcomes



To use clear voice projection due to the nature of the exercise.



To justify ideas and to challenge the opinions of others.



To use persuasive rhetorical devices.

Exercise

1. Explain to students that the room represents a continuum of opinion, with one end being 'strongly agree' and the other 'strongly disagree'.
2. Show or read students a statement. This could be related to an area of study or current affairs. Students need to move to the spot on the continuum which represents their opinion.
3. Take feedback from students as to why they have stood where they have. Focus on encouraging students to justify why they taken a particular opinion and engage them in debates with students in other places around the room.
4. Ask students to try to persuade people to move closer to their position and let students move as they are speaking. This way they can see the effect their persuasion is having!

Debate

A debate offers students a chance to develop arguments on an issue and challenge with counter-arguments.



Influence
Organise and structure
Analyse and Evaluate



6+
students



45 - 90mins

Skills outcomes



To work as part of a group work and manage interactions.



To speak in an expressive manner, using voice and body language.



To generate, organise, structure and develop ideas. To engage with counter-arguments.



To use rhetorical devices.

Exercise

1. Depending on the format of the debate you are using, introduce students to the concept of debating and roles within a debate (the proposition and opposition, and the roles of each speaker within their team).
2. Divide students into teams of proposition or opposition. Although you only need three or four students in each team to speak, additional students could be involved in supporting the team's preparation. Depending on the topic, you may want to give students a lot of time to prepare and research the motion, or just 15 minutes from its announcement to the debate.
3. Introduce the motion using the format 'This House would ...' or 'This House believes ...'
4. Run the debate. Allocate the roles of chair and timekeeper and encourage the audience to make floor speeches before the final two speakers summarise the debate.
5. Judge the debate and give feedback. You could use the four strands to do this. You may want to create a judging panel, which could be made up of other students or experts. You could also take a vote on audience opinion before and after the debate to see if either team has shifted opinion.

Peer Teaching

Peer teaching allows students to articulate their understanding of a concept, as well as teaching their peer something new.



Share
information
To understand



2+
students



10 -30mins

Skills outcomes



To take into account the audience's level of understanding.



To explain and reason.

Exercise

1. Introduce students to a concept or information. To make the teaching experience authentic, give different students or groups of students different information so that in their peer teaching experience they will be genuinely learning something new.
2. Give students time to prepare their teaching episode. This could be using a devising a presentation, a handout, an activity or entirely verbally.
3. Put students in pairs, or larger groups to teach each other their content.
4. Allow time for students to ask each other questions, give feedback and reflect on the process of teaching someone.

Elevator Pitch

This activity gets students thinking about how they can be both succinct and persuasive in the time it would take an elevator to descend.



Influence



2+
students



5-10mins

Skills outcomes



To show self-assurance and flair.



To use eye contact, voice and gestures to engage the audience.



To maintain focus on task, structure talk under strict time conditions and give reasons.



To use rhetorical devices to persuade.

Exercise

1. Give students or let students choose a topic, item or idea they are going to 'sell'.
2. Allow students time to prepare for their pitch - they will probably need about 15 minutes. You may want to introduce them to certain rhetorical devices, or the Greek idea of persuasion being about logos, pathos and ethos.
3. Students should be making their pitch under tight time cond

Collective Writing

A creative group exercise where one student is appointed the scribe and anyone can contribute



3+
students



20-40mins

Skills outcomes

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Analyse and
Evaluate



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Active listening.



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To acquire new vocabulary.

Exercise

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2. Appoint a scribe before the exercise begins and make sure they have a pen and paper to note down other students' ideas.
 1. Give students five minutes to write down their own ideas first before they share with the group.
 2. Students share their ideas with the group in turn, the scribe notes down each idea (10 mins). Encourage students to suggest alternatives
 3. Once all the ideas have been collected the scribe reads them back to the group to edit and restructure the piece.

Extensions

- Students could reflect on and redraft the piece they collectively created, or swap with another group to give feedback.
- Students could be given certain words or types of words (e.g. adverbs) to use in their writing.
- Time could be allocated to reflect on the exercise as a whole and how well the group worked together (using the reflections protocol)