

# Speaking Guide



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Research states that oral expression precedes written expression in students. It is imperative that your student is offered multiple opportunities to speak about his or her work daily to encourage thinking and expression skills.

## The standards call for speaking that meets the following criteria:

- Your student is prepared to speak, armed with evidence to support his or her thinking.
- Your student responds to spoken and unspoken conventions of discussion, such as knowing when to offer one's thoughts and when to listen.
- Your student asks and responds to questions that deepen the thoughts presented in discussion.
- Your student summarizes larger bodies of information, including those presented orally.
- Your student creates multi-faceted presentations to demonstrate thinking to multiple audiences.

## To that end, below are some suggestions to help improve your student's speaking abilities:

- Insist your student speaks with evidence when responding to questions and activities. Work with your student to develop automaticity with this expectation.
- Create dialogue with your student and encourage him or her to have dialogue with others as well. Instruct him or her on how to effectively engage with discussion partners of various ages, backgrounds, and beliefs.
- Ask your student questions about what he or she is saying.
- Invite your student to ask you questions about what you are saying or to have follow-up questions for others.
- Develop questions with your student about what he or she is learning or reading. Invite your student to answer these question through the reading or through extension activities.
- Periodically, ask your student to briefly summarize thinking. This may include:
  - After sections of reading text
  - During a discussion when multiple points have been presented
  - When he or she revises his or her thinking
  - After completing a discussion
  - After completing a reading selection
- Create opportunities for your student to present his or her learning, such as projects or major writing tasks. Sufficiently prepare your student to do so.
- Encourage your student to speak with specificity. Some sentence starters for specificity include:
  - I agree/disagree with you when you said...
  - This evidence from the text made me think...
  - I was thinking... but now I think... because...
  - This was effective/ineffective because...
  - On page...
- Insist your student speaks audibly and with correct grammar at all times. Ask him or her to repeat if he or she does not.

# Listening Guide



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Listening is a receptive linguistic skill that develops before your student begins to read. Research also demonstrates that the number of words students hear has a drastic impact on their ability as readers and writers. It is essential that your student links his or her listening skills to reading skills.

## Below are some suggestions to effectively encourage your student's listening skills:

- Speak frequently to your student inside and outside of learning contexts. Encourage conversations rather than providing screen time.
- When speaking to your student, use vocabulary at varying levels, including vocabulary that would be used in conversation between adults.
- Post high-frequency word cards in a visible place while your student is working. Encourage him or her to repeat the words after you.
- Read aloud to your student frequently and encourage him or her to read aloud to you.
- Provide your student with multiple opportunities to hear the same text and to read and then reread short sections of text aloud.
- Provide different contexts for your student to listen, such as storytimes, audiobooks, presentations, and demonstrations at museums or other locations.
- If your student is struggling to read a text, provide a read-aloud of the text while he or she follows along with the words. It is likely that your student can listen to texts at a higher level of complexity than he or she can read.
- Use the read-aloud feature of the curriculum to help engage your student and offer opportunities for listening. However, it is important that your student learns to read independently; do not always provide the option to listen to the text before attempting to read independently.

## There are many methods to read aloud to your student. Use a variety of the following options:

- **Read-aloud:** The Learning Guide or the read-aloud feature takes sole responsibility for reading the text.
- **Cloze reading:** The Learning Guide or read-aloud feature reads aloud but pauses for words or phrases which your student is responsible for reading aloud.
- **Shared reading:** The Learning Guide and your student take turns reading sections of the text, such as sentences or paragraphs. This can be executed with different balances on the part of your student or the Learning Guide.
- **Multiple readings:** The read-aloud focuses on a small section of text which is heard multiple times, building independence on the part of the student. You may begin the readings with a read-aloud, move through cloze reading, and then eventually ask your student to read a sentence, paragraph, or section aloud independently.
- **Choral reading:** The Learning Guide and your student read aloud at the same time, developing expression and phrasing.

# Discussion Techniques



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Oral and written language are strongly connected as your student develops his or her reading and writing skills. It is imperative that your student has multiple daily opportunities to discuss his or her thinking to build robust conceptual understandings about what he or she is learning. Below are some techniques to improve the quality of discussion with your student.

## When to use discussion:

- Have a discussion with your student any time he or she has completed answering the questions in an activity. These are marked frequently in the curriculum.
- If your student answers a question incorrectly, discuss his or her thinking and evidence, rather than simply providing the correct answer.
- If your student is having trouble writing or expressing his or her thoughts on paper, have your student first discuss what he or she is thinking.
- Your student should always discuss his or her projects in all subjects, specifically explaining his or her finished project and how he or she achieved the final result.
- Discussions are naturally engaging for students. Engage in discussion if your student's attention seems to be waning.
- Stop to discuss the meaning of the text if your student seems to be struggling with a complex text.

## Discussion protocols:

- Have a one-to-one discussion with your student in which he or she explains his or her thinking while you ask probing questions.
- Have a "silent discussion" with your student in which he or she writes responses to you on a piece of paper and you respond on the same piece of paper. This allows your student to focus on understanding and thinking of a response and slows the pace of the conversation.
- Your student can explain learning and concepts to someone who is not involved with his or her schoolwork, such as a sibling, relative, or friend.
- Collaboration is provided in the curriculum for your student to share ideas with other students.
- Your student may prepare presentations of his or her project or other major learning activities to a group of friends, relatives, or appropriate community venues.

## Effective discussion tips:

- Give your student time to think before responding orally to any questions. If your student is responding quickly and without thought, insist he or she takes time to think before responding.
- Insist on evidence to accompany every response. Listen closely to what your student says. If he or she does not provide evidence, ask, "what in the text makes you think that?"
- Your student may need to write before he or she can effectively speak or vice versa. Help your student understand how he or she can best be prepared for discussion.
- Ask open-ended questions to encourage your student to think. Some examples include:
  - Why do you think that?
  - What evidence in the text showed you that?
  - Why do you think that's important?
  - Can you say more about that?
- Offer your student opportunities to discuss with people of various backgrounds, ages, and relationships.
- Ask your student to explain thinking in more than one way.
- Insist your student speaks audibly, clearly, and with appropriate grammar.