

Talking about graffiti

Teaching strategies for reading comprehension



Best for:

- Year level: 3–5
- Phase of learning: surface

Overview

Description	<p>Students use spoken language to explore new knowledge about the topic of a text, then record their speculation about the topic on a graffiti wall.</p> <p>Speaking and listening are the modes of language most used to explore new knowledge, to understand experiences and make connections between concepts and the words that represent them. Spoken language is the foundation of teaching reading. Through spoken language experiences students learn about words, word groups and clauses, and how words are used in specific contexts. They also learn about making language choices to suit different audiences.</p>
Learning focus (based on National Literacy Learning Progression)	<p>Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• read simple texts with support from a proficient reader (UnT4) <p>Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• make predictions using the cover of a book (UnT4) <p>Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• make plausible interpretations of the meaning of unfamiliar words (UnT5)• understand simple qualifying or emotive words (UnT5)• understand words that state opinions (e.g. I think) (UnT6)
Teacher preparation	<p>Establish a context for talking (based on learning area content) and select an associated text.</p> <p>Bring in a collection of items that reflect the topic of the chosen text. Include interesting items about which students can speculate, e.g. a frog aquarium for a book about tadpoles, a student café for a text about kids' cooking, a scarecrow or old corn grinder for a text related to farming.</p> <p>Establish a graffiti wall, e.g. on butcher's paper, a chalkboard, or a whiteboard — see the sample graffiti wall below and the appendix.</p>

Suggested implementation

The graffiti wall

1. Model the use of the graffiti wall. The example below is centred on a scarecrow brought in to initiate discussion around farming.
2. Once students have noticed the collection of items about the topic and begin spontaneous discussion, encourage them to record speculations on the graffiti wall.

Sample graffiti wall

Will he scare the birds?		I wonder why Mrs T has put him here?
	Do farmers still use scarecrows?	
	Do you think he is friendly?	I wonder if he has a heart?

3. During the discussion, model how language is used for a variety of purposes, such as expressing opinions and justifying positions, negotiating relationships and explaining.
4. Deepen their learning using vocabulary maps or concept webs.

More information

Teaching the language of discussion

Student participation in conversations may be imagined along a continuum. At one end, students may need the teacher's help, even in simple conversation; at the other end, students happily fill the roles of speaker and listener in informal and formal discussion groups.

Talk around texts is a foundation of students' developing knowledge about language and texts, but as participation varies along the continuum, teachers must explicitly teach students how to use language to connect with others and, in the process, learn about language and texts.

Sharing ideas in different contexts

Encourage students to share their own ideas and respond to others' ideas in different situations, for example:

- informal sharing: students share and discuss an activity in progress
- sharing circle: students take turns around a circle to present and talk about an item of work
- partner/small-group sharing: students share their work with a previously nominated partner or group during allocated sharing time, such as at the end of after-reading activities. This strategy fosters active engagement, with more turns for talking
- formal sharing: for example, a story map completed after a read-aloud activity and presented to the whole class, another class or assembly as students' confidence grows.

Further reading

- For detailed, practical ideas for explicitly teaching students to participate in sharing thoughts, opinions and ideas:

Department of Education (Western Australia) 2013, *Speaking and listening resource book*, Department of Education, WA.

Note: This resource is available as a free [PDF download](#).

- For advice on using effective, interactive classroom talk to promote learning:

Jones, P., Simpson, A. & Thwaite, A. 2018, *Talking the talk: Snapshots from Australian classrooms*, PETAA, Newtown NSW.

Note: This will need to be borrowed from a library or purchased.



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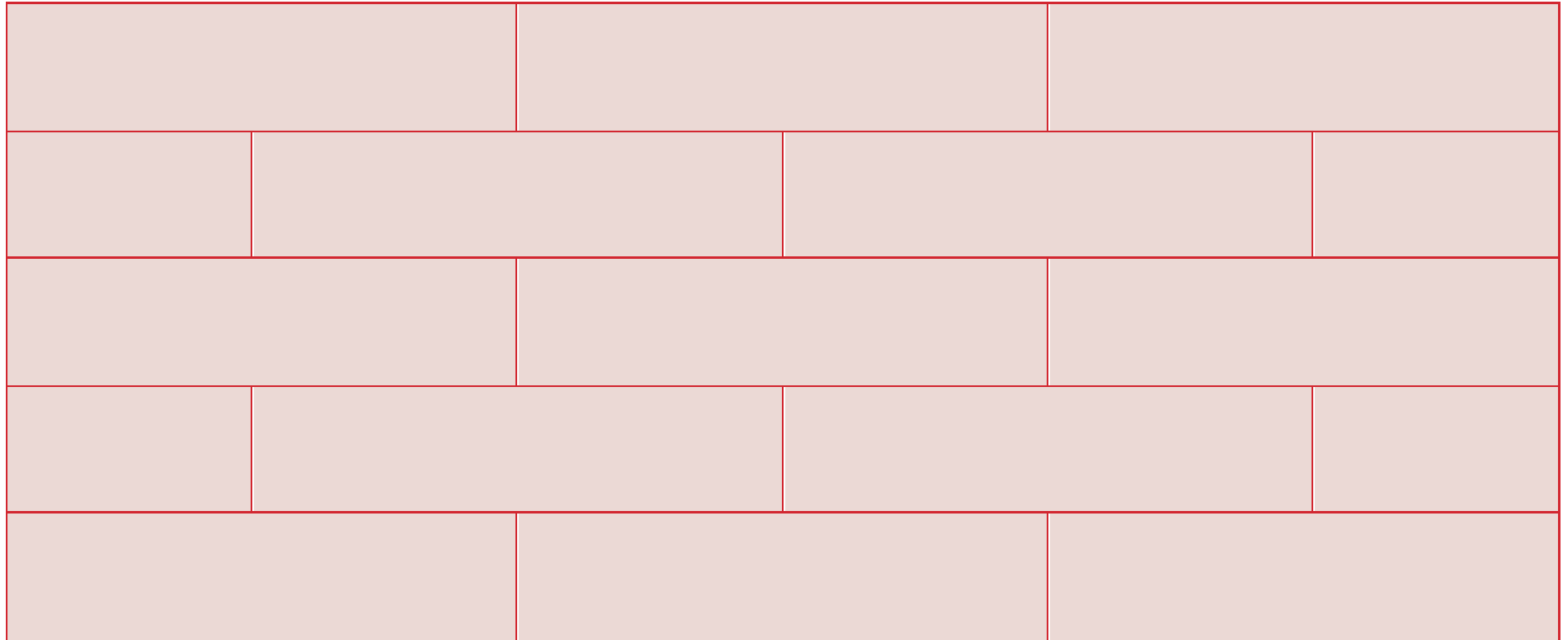
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Appendix 1: Graffiti wall template

This is available as either an A4 or A3 template.



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