



Talk and Learn

Focused Language Activities for Young Children

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Primary Concepts®

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PUBLISHERS NOTE: The table of contents pages are linked to the lessons. If you click on an entry, you will go to that page in the ebook. You can also use the pages on the left to navigate through the book.

Contents

belt	1	hat	59
whisk	3	basket	61
mirror	5	iron.....	63
cell phone	7	broom.....	65
spray bottle.....	9	muffin tin	67
shoe	11	clock.....	69
ball	13	hairbrush	71
ear of corn	15	umbrella	73
battery	17	ladle.....	75
helmet	19	picture frame	77
remote	21	bar of soap	79
laundry basket	23	flashlight.....	81
ice cube tray	25	electric fan	83
banana.....	27	pillow	85
toothbrush.....	29	rolling pin.....	87
clothes hanger	31	sunglasses.....	89
light bulb.....	33	loaf of bread	91
rotary can opener.....	35	rake.....	93
book	37	lamp	95
dishtowel	39	sieve	97
mug.....	41	necktie.....	99
baseball glove	43	potholder.....	101
suitcase	45	frying pan	103
hairdryer.....	47	watch.....	105
cutting board	49	salt shaker	107
candle	51	flower	109
globe.....	53	flag	111
hammer	55	retractable tape measure.....	113
vase.....	57		

Talk and Learn

Children come to school with vastly different levels of language development. Many come from language-rich environments where they have heard thousands and thousands of words spoken. These children are often the most verbal in the classroom. At the other end of the continuum are children who come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. These children need special help in gaining fluency in English.

In between these two extremes are many other children whose language skills are also weak. These children come from homes where they are not talked to nearly as much as the highly verbal children. Their language development suffers when the more verbal children dominate in class discussions.

Reaching all of these children is a challenge. For young children, the key to building vocabulary and English fluency is to begin with real things. Talk and Learn lessons provide daily oral language support focused on something real that the teacher takes

to school for the day. These “real things” are ordinary objects like a potholder, a mirror, or a lamp. An established daily Talk Time is a routine that children will look forward to. It will give children an opportunity to build their language skills, and it will give you an opportunity to evaluate the oral language needs of each child in your classroom.

Talk Time

Take to school the object listed at the top of the page. Put this object in a pillowcase or a bag, so it is completely hidden. Start each Talk Time lesson by passing around the hidden object and let the children feel what is inside. Encourage the children to talk about what they think it might be.

Then reveal the hidden object and begin asking questions listed in the DESCRIBING, COMPARING, and EXTENDING sections of the lessons, or any other questions you may think of. The questions listed are designed so that children with varying levels of language development can participate.

DESCRIBING

These questions ask children to examine the physical characteristics of the object, and tell what it is used for.

COMPARING

These questions ask children to tell how the object is like or different from others similar to it. This is a more abstract level of discussion and engages children in more sophisticated language. Sentences get to be more complex in this part of the lesson. To make the Talk Time

more concrete, show other examples of the object being discussed. Then engage the children in a specific comparison of the objects before you move on to more abstract comparisons.

EXTENDING

These questions challenge the children's verbal skills by asking them to respond to more sophisticated prompts and explain their thinking in more abstract ways.

spray bottle

Pssst...pssst...It's no secret, spray bottles are a favorite with kids. Most children have used spray bottles themselves, and will have informed opinions on the merits of "stream" versus "mist."

Talk Time

Take a conventional plastic spray bottle to class today. If you happen to have a different type available, show that one as well.

Vocabulary

nozzle, adjustable, mist, spray, stream, pump, liquids (water, chemicals, cleaners), measurements (ounces, milliliters), metric

DESCRIBING

Describe the way this object looks and the way it is used.

- What is this spray bottle made of?
- What color is the bottle? What color is the nozzle?
- Is the nozzle adjustable? What happens when you turn the nozzle?
- How do you get the bottle to spray a light mist? How do you get it to spray a strong stream?
- How do you pump the sprayer? Which part do you pump?
- What do you put inside a spray bottle? (liquids, such as water, chemicals)
- What do people use spray bottles for?
- Are there markings along the side? What are they for? (to show liquid measurements)

Talk and Learn 9

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COMPARING

Compare this object to others in the way it looks and the way it is used.

- Does anyone at your home ever use a spray bottle? What do they use it for? What do they put inside it? How big is it?
- How is a spray bottle like a pump?
- What different sizes are spray bottles? (as short as a _____, as tall as a _____)
- How much water do you think my bottle could hold? Would it hold more or less than a coffee cup? a milk carton?
- Can any liquid spray through the nozzle? How about milk? What about paint? Is that too thick?
- Some products are sold in spray bottles. Can you name some?

EXTENDING

Go beyond physical description and typical uses.

- Could you use a spray bottle for a toy? What would you do with it?
- Where could I buy a spray bottle?
- Why might it be important to label your spray bottle to tell what type of liquid is inside it?
- My spray bottle reminds me of a duck. Why do you think so? Can you see the head? the beak? an eye?
- How might I adjust the nozzle to get the water to spray the furthest? When would that be handy? When would you want to spray a very fine mist?

Talk and Learn 10

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Building Language Skills

Throughout the Talk Time lesson, you will want to make sure that all children are continuously extending their language skills, not just with individual words, but learning how words go together in sentences. After a child has responded to a question, you can extend the learning by rephrasing the child's answer in a slightly more sophisticated way or with greater detail. If a child answers with a single word, rephrase the answer in a complete sentence. If a child answers in a grammatically incorrect way, repeat the child's sentence, but correct the

grammar. Avoid embarrassing anyone. Getting children to talk, correctly or incorrectly, is more important than their saying each sentence correctly.

Many children enjoy bringing in objects from home and being the Talk Time teacher for the day. Once children are familiar with the Talk Time routine, you might want to set up a regular event in which a selected child each week brings in something from home to put in the Talk Time bag. Guide the discussions in the same way you lead the Talk Time lessons in this book with the DESCRIBING, COMPARING, and EXTENDING questions.

belt

Belts are all around us—literally! Just try to hold up your end of the conversation today as children talk about how belts are alike and different.

Talk Time

Use a lady's belt with a buckle for this Talk Time session. Many ladies' belts have interesting designs or patterns which might help inspire the children's conversation. Show several other belts, if possible, for comparison.

Vocabulary

design, pattern, buckle, loop, fashion, function, fasten, materials
(leather, fabric, canvas)

DESCRIBING

Describe the way this object looks and the way it is used.

- ◆ What color(s) is this belt? Is there a design or pattern on it?
- ◆ Can you name some different parts of the belt? (holes, buckle)
- ◆ What do we use belts for?
- ◆ What shape is this belt?
- ◆ Do you think this is a man's or a lady's belt?
- ◆ What are the holes for? Why are there so many?
- ◆ How does a belt stay on your pants? What do the pants need? (loops)

COMPARING

Compare this object to others in the way it looks and the way it is used.

- ◆ Most belts have the same basic shape. Why is that?
- ◆ Some belts are just for fashion, not for function (a useful purpose).
What do you think this means?

- ◆ How might men's and ladies' belts be different? How could you tell if a belt belonged to a man or a woman?
- ◆ Why do belts come in different sizes?
- ◆ Do you have a belt? How is it similar to and different from this belt we're looking at?
- ◆ Which person in your family has the most belts? Which person wears a belt most often?
- ◆ Do all belts have holes and buckles? How else could a belt be fastened?

EXTENDING

Go beyond physical description and typical uses.

- ◆ Can you explain how a buckle works?
- ◆ Do you ever wear a belt? What do you like about wearing a belt? What don't you like about wearing a belt?
- ◆ What materials have you seen belts made of? (leather, fabric, canvas)
- ◆ Can you think of other uses for a belt?
- ◆ What other things can you think of that have a similar purpose to belts?
- ◆ Pretend you are wearing a belt that's been fastened too tightly. Now pretend you forgot to wear a belt, and you really need one!