

Engaging your students in speaking and listening

Claire Ross



Key questions for today

1. How can we build fluency and confidence in speaking?
2. What makes a good speaking task?
3. How can you get your students *really* listening?



A young woman with long dark hair is sitting at a wooden table in a library, reading an open book. She is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved shirt. The library has wooden bookshelves filled with books, and several square pendant lights hang from the ceiling. The background wall is white with a wooden panel at the bottom. The text "How can we build fluency and confidence in speaking?" is overlaid on the white wall.

How can we build fluency and confidence in speaking?

Complete the sentence

A safe speaking environment...



Type your
ideas!

A safe speaking environment

Immersive tasks

Right level of challenge

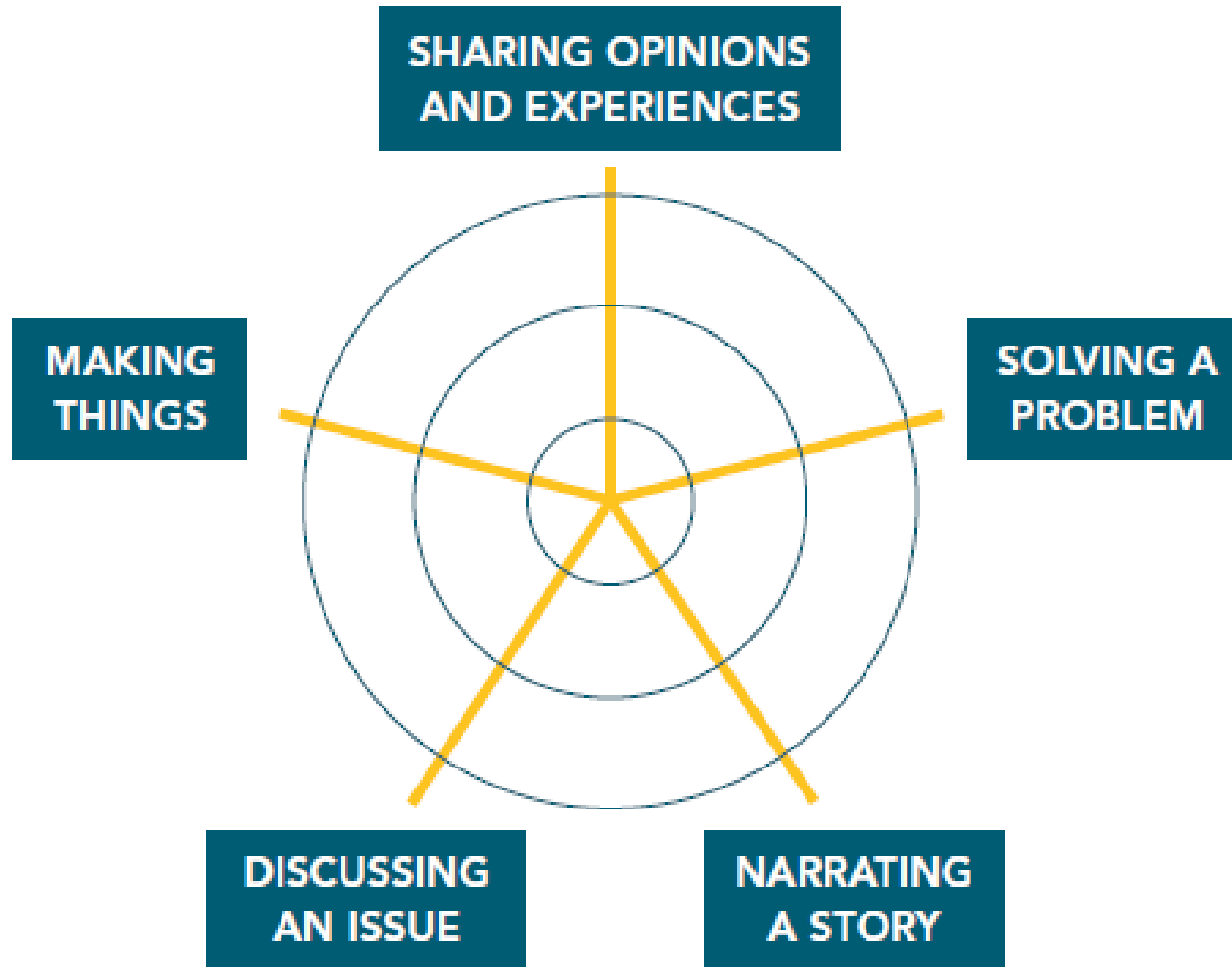
Engaging

Relevant

Give students some agency



Immersive tasks



What do your students enjoy most?

A safe speaking environment

Immersive tasks

Positive peer interaction



A safe speaking environment

Immersive tasks

Positive peer interaction

Feedback that celebrates communicative success




A safe speaking environment

“...an environment in which students will feel safe to speak is vital for supporting students’ language learning.”

“...an environment in which time for speaking is valued not simply as time for extra practice of previously learned material but as time in which new learning opportunities come to life.”

Kubanyiova, M. (2018) *Creating a Safe Speaking Environment*, CUP.

A woman with long dark hair is sitting at a wooden table in a library or bookstore, reading an open book. She is wearing a light-colored, patterned shirt. The room is filled with wooden bookshelves filled with books. There are several wooden tables and benches arranged in the room. The lighting is warm and focused on the woman and the bookshelves. The text "What makes a good speaking task?" is overlaid on the image in a bold, black font.

What makes a good speaking task?

What makes a good speaking task?

Think about a time when you did a speaking in class that went well

- What was it?
- What made it successful?
- How would you describe it?



Click on the link

<https://app.sli.do/event/vxjMNADdpHxzg656LW6QGC>



Write an adjective that describes a good speaking task.

slido



Write an adjective that describes a good speaking task.

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

What makes a good speaking task?

1. Preparation: easy to set up and manage
2. Focus: has a purpose
3. Preparation: needed language can be anticipated
4. Naturalness: mimics real life language use
5. Generation: produces lots of language
6. Versatility: easy to adapt and use again

Adapted from *How to Write Excellent ELT Materials, Speaking Activities*, Cunningham, S. 2016

Speaking and listening tasks

Dictate



Banana dictation

task

Listen and write what I say.

When you hear *banana*, write your own word.



Banana dictation

1. Demonstrate.
2. Children write a sentence.
3. They secretly replace a word with 'banana.'
4. They dictate their sentence to a partner.
5. They guess the 'banana' words.



Word building



i. Match the animals with their young ones.

horse

kitten



dog

calf

cat

colt



cow

puppy



pig

cub



tiger

piglet

sheep

kid



goat

duckling



duck

lamb



Evaluate “Banana dictation”

Type yes / no / not sure

1. This is a good speaking task.
2. Students have to listen carefully.
3. I can adapt this activity for my students.
4. I’m going to try this activity with my students.

Write your answers

task

1. **Listen:** Take a piece of paper
2. Listen to the instructions
3. Write your answers in different places on your paper
4. Write one or two words, not full sentences
5. **Pairwork:** Look at your partner's words.
6. Guess why they wrote them.

Write your answers

knitting

cricket

mountain climbing

2. Work in groups. Come to some agreement on each of the activities given below. Decide which is the most interesting, dulllest, most dangerous, safest, most rewarding, most exciting.

cooking	fishing	playing football
knitting	dancing	listening to music
reading	sewing	mountain climbing
walking	swimming	
painting	watching TV	



Let's Talk

1. Where do you cry? What are the things that make you cry?
2. Can you cry when you are happy?
3. Which are the things that make you happy?
In what ways do you show your happiness?



Evaluate “Write your answers”

Type yes / no / not sure

1. This is a good speaking task.
2. Students have to listen carefully.
3. I can adapt this activity for my students.
4. I'm going to try this activity with my students.

Describe



Describe the picture

task

Who am I describing?



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Describe the picture

1. **Demonstrate:** Describe something or someone from the picture.
2. Students listen and identify what you described.
3. **Pairwork:** Students describe something or someone from the picture.
4. Their partner listens and identifies it.



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Evaluate “Describe the picture”

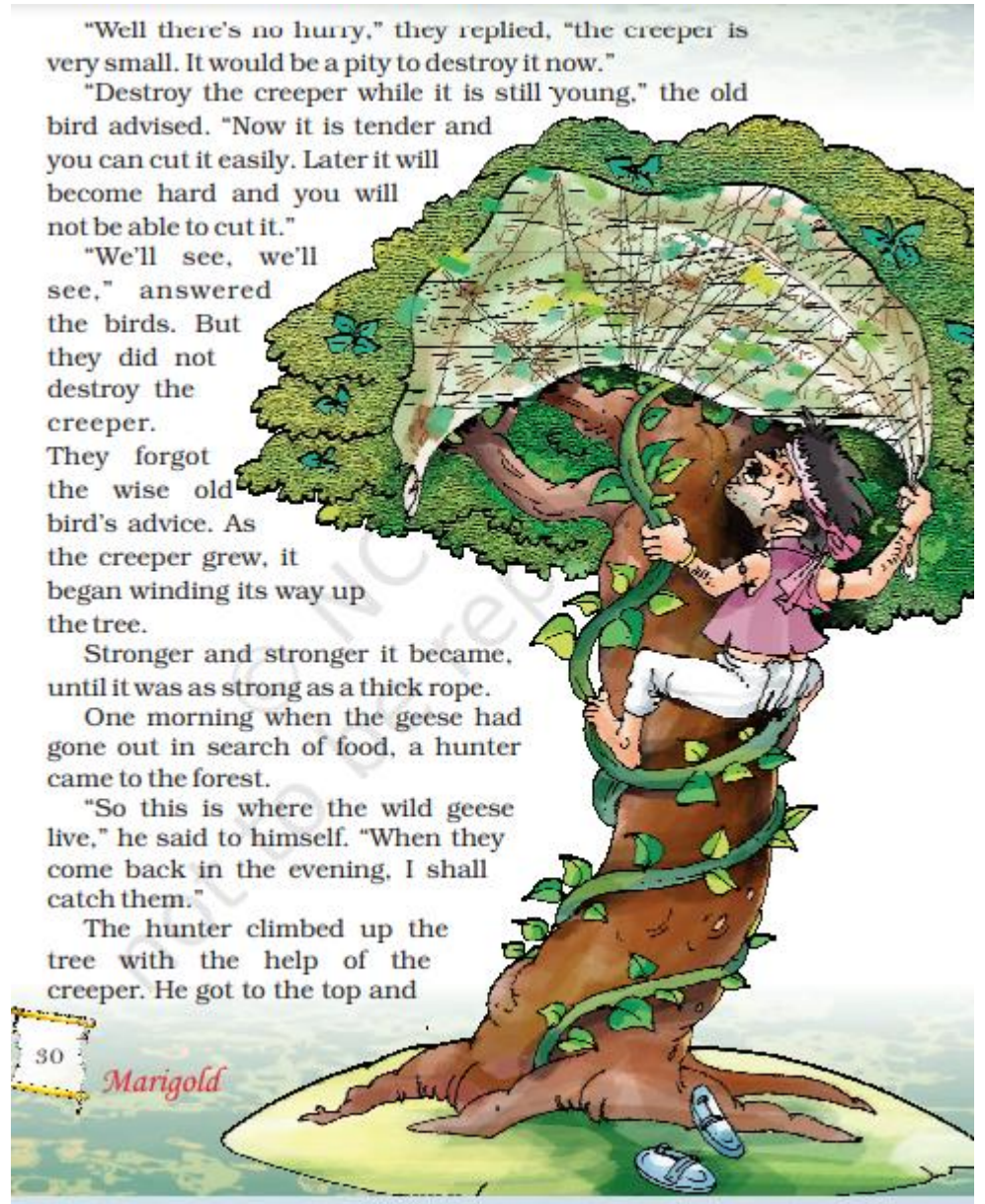
Type yes / no / not sure

1. This is a good speaking task.
2. Students have to listen carefully.
3. I can adapt this activity for my students.
4. I'm going to try this activity with my students.

Describe and draw

Listen.

Draw what I describe.



"Well there's no hurry," they replied, "the creeper is very small. It would be a pity to destroy it now."

"Destroy the creeper while it is still young," the old bird advised. "Now it is tender and you can cut it easily. Later it will become hard and you will not be able to cut it."

"We'll see, we'll see," answered the birds. But they did not destroy the creeper.

They forgot the wise old bird's advice. As the creeper grew, it began winding its way up the tree.

Stronger and stronger it became, until it was as strong as a thick rope.

One morning when the geese had gone out in search of food, a hunter came to the forest.

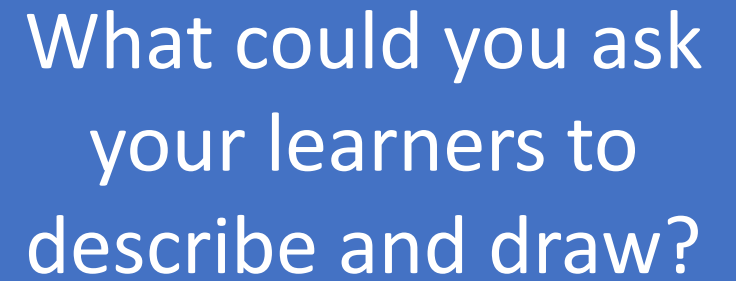
"So this is where the wild geese live," he said to himself. "When they come back in the evening, I shall catch them."

The hunter climbed up the tree with the help of the creeper. He got to the top and

Describe and draw

1. **Demonstrate:** Describe a picture or drawing.
2. Students listen and draw.
3. They compare pictures.

4. **Pairwork:** Students draw something.
5. They describe it to their partner.
6. Their partner draws.
7. They compare pictures.



What could you ask your learners to describe and draw?

Evaluate “Describe and draw”

Type yes / no / not sure

1. This is a good speaking task.
2. Students have to listen carefully.
3. I can adapt this activity for my students.
4. I'm going to try this activity with my students.

Imagine



Image from Pixabay

Story from a picture

Work in groups.

Look at the picture.

Think about:

- Who
- Where
- What
- Why

Tell a story about the picture.

Tell another group your story.



It so happened, Class VIII, p.8

Evaluate “Story from a picture”

Type yes / no / not sure

1. This is a good speaking task.
2. Students have to listen carefully.
3. I can adapt this activity for my students.
4. I’m going to try this activity with my students.

What happens next?

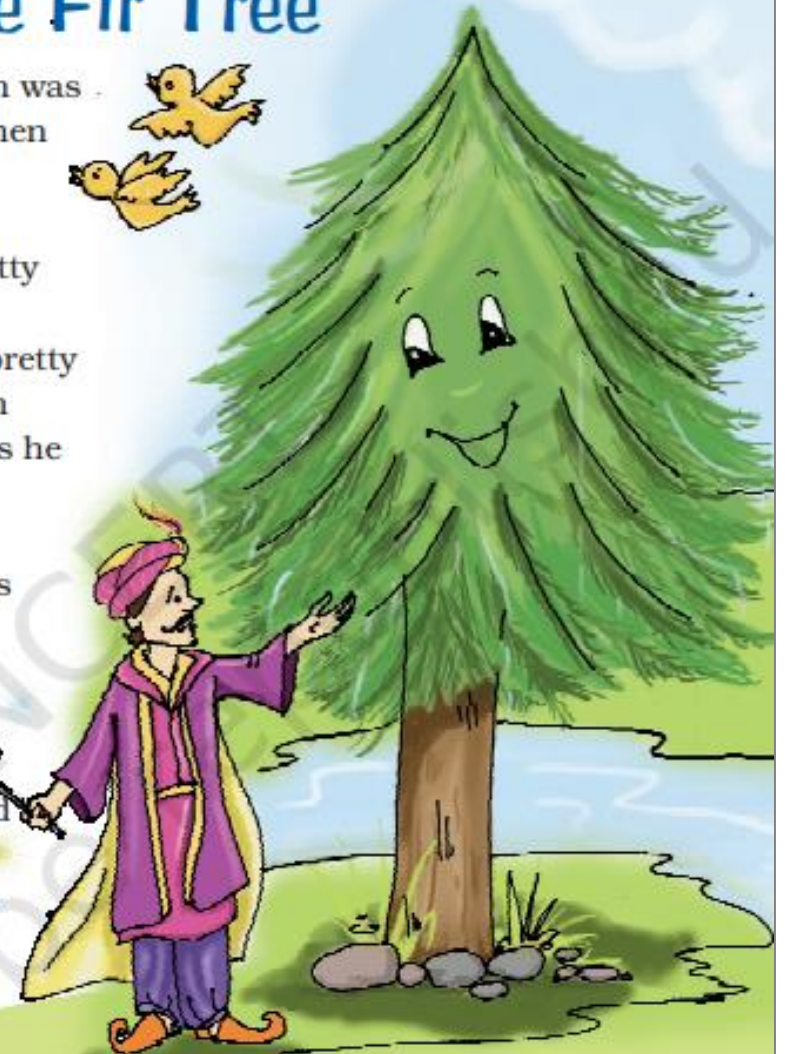
task

The Little Fir Tree

Shetty the magician was returning home, when all of a sudden it began to rain. It rained heavily. Shetty looked around for shelter and saw a pretty little fir tree. He ran towards it as fast as he could.

Soon the rain stopped. Shetty was happy that he did not get wet.

"Thank you, you have been kind to me. I would like to reward you. Ask for four wishes and I will grant them," said the magician.



What happens next?

Pairs

Read/listen to the beginning of the story.

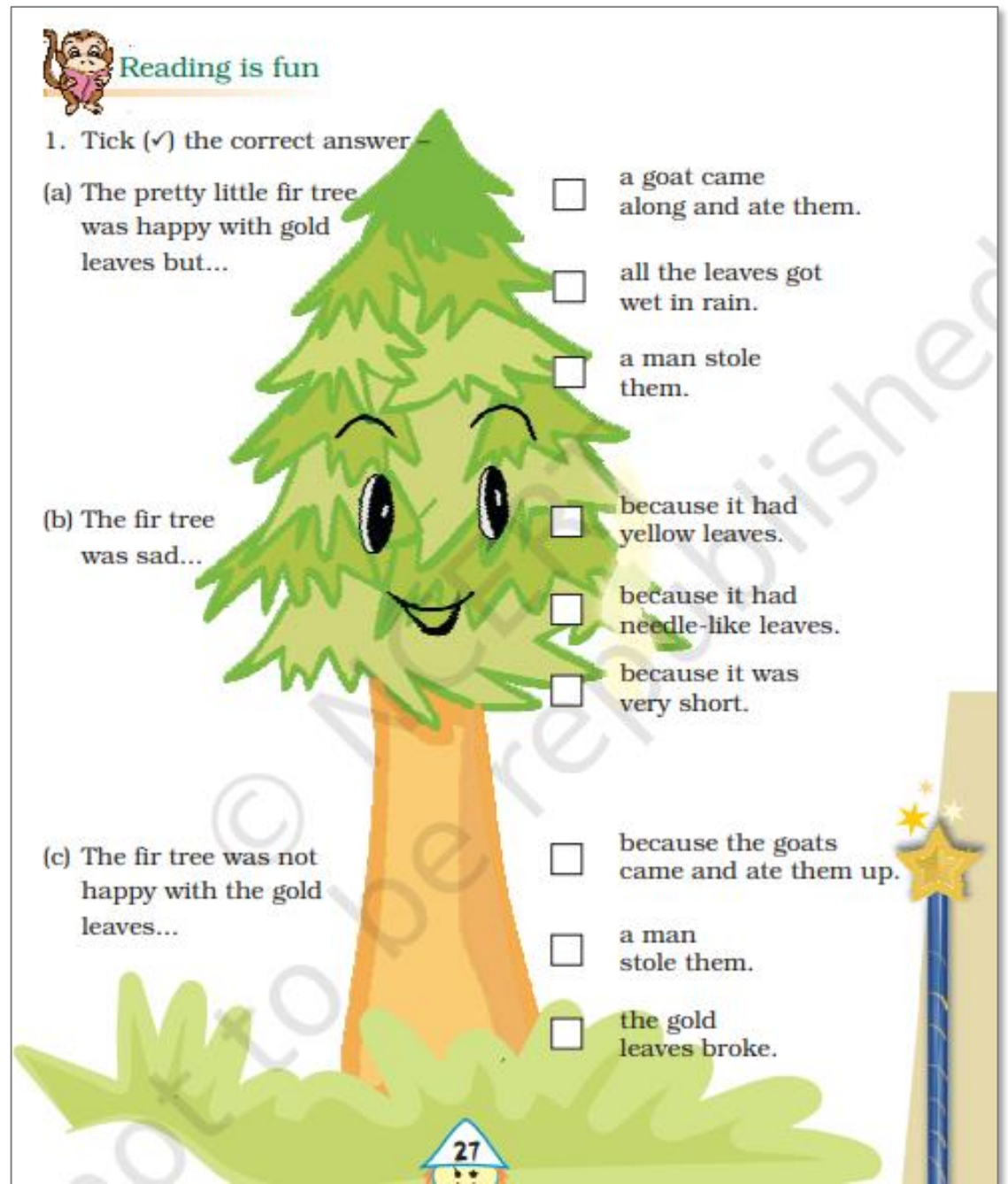
Imagine what happens next.

Groups of four

Listen to your friends' ideas.

Are they similar or different to yours?

Read/listen and compare ideas.



Reading is fun

1. Tick (✓) the correct answer.

(a) The pretty little fir tree was happy with gold leaves but...

- a goat came along and ate them.
- all the leaves got wet in rain.
- a man stole them.

(b) The fir tree was sad...

- because it had yellow leaves.
- because it had needle-like leaves.
- because it was very short.

(c) The fir tree was not happy with the gold leaves...

- because the goats came and ate them up.
- a man stole them.
- the gold leaves broke.

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Evaluate “What happens next?”

Type yes / no / not sure

1. This is a good speaking task.
2. Students have to listen carefully.
3. I can adapt this activity for my students.
4. I'm going to try this activity with my students.

Remember



Image from Unsplash



Picture/video memory quiz

task

Work in pairs.

Write down:

3 things the children were eating

2 things you saw on the walls

1 colour of the tablecloth



Picture/video memory quiz



What questions could you ask about this picture?

What festival is it?

How many children are in the picture?

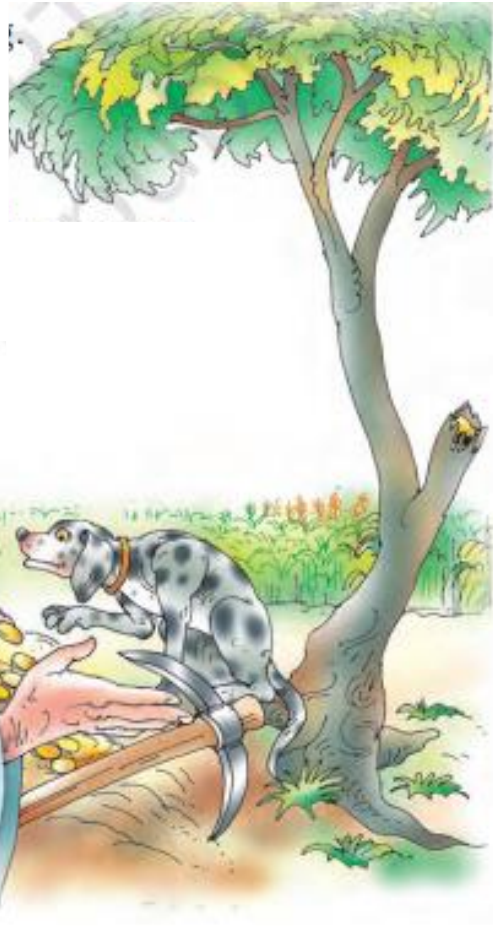
What colour is the woman's sari?

Evaluate “Picture/video memory quiz”

Type yes / no / not sure

1. This is a good speaking task.
2. Students have to listen carefully.
3. I can adapt this activity for my students.
4. I’m going to try this activity with my students.

Retell the story



“The ashes that made the trees bloom”

Retell the story

1. Students cover the text.
guess the story in pairs.
2. You tell the story. They
listen and compare it to
their story.
3. Students retell your story
in pairs.



Evaluate “Retell the story”

Type yes / no / not sure

1. This is a good speaking task.
2. Students have to listen carefully.
3. I can adapt this activity for my students.
4. I’m going to try this activity with my students.

A woman with long dark hair is sitting at a wooden table in a library, reading an open book. She is wearing a light-colored patterned shirt. The library has wooden bookshelves filled with books, and several square pendant lights hang from the ceiling. The text "Reflection and summary" is overlaid on the image in a bold, black font.

Reflection and summary

Summary

Creating a safe environment for speaking

Choose the right tasks

Encourage positive peer interaction

Give feedback to celebrate communicative success

Summary

Speaking and listening tasks

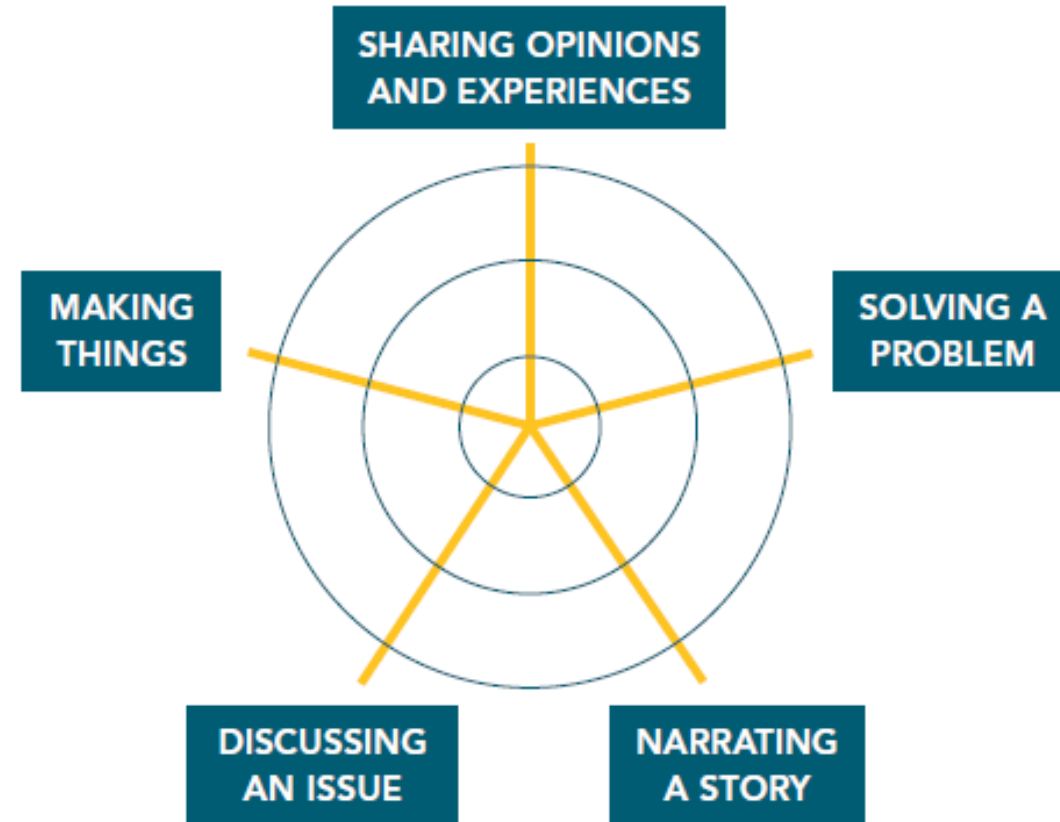
Right level of c [REDACTED]

Make sure it's r [REDACTED] to your students

Give students a r [REDACTED] to listen

D [REDACTED] first, then allow students to lead

Give c [REDACTED]

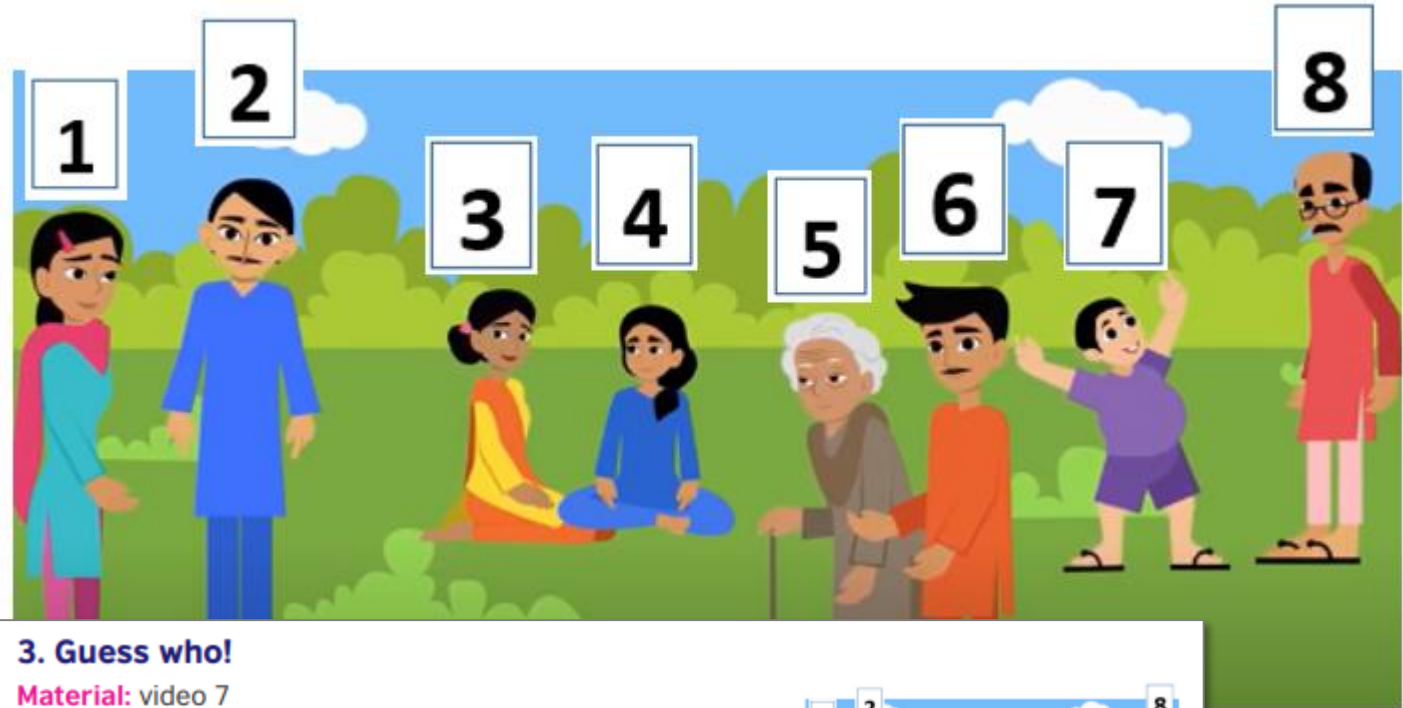


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Teacher support material

Learn English with Friends



3. Guess who!

Material: video 7

- Pause the video at 0:12. Write or stick a number next to each person, like this:
- Say: 'He's tall. He's old. He's got glasses. Guess who!' Students say the number of the person you described (8). Or, ask a student to come to the screen and point.
- Describe other people in the picture for students to guess. Students take turns to describe someone in the picture for the others to guess.



More support: Write the adjectives on the board for students to choose from.

More practice: Students can use other language they know to describe the pictures, for example 'She's wearing a yellow shirt', 'He's got black hair'. They can do this activity in pairs.

Online: You could show another picture of a group of people for more practice.

References and further learning

Kubanyiova, M. (2018) *Creating a Safe Speaking Environment* (CUP)

https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/campaign_page/cambridge-papers-elt/

Zoltan Dornyei: Creating safe environments for speaking IATEFL 2018 talk

<http://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2018/04/09/iatefl-safe-speaking-environments/>

Cunningham, S. (2016) *How to Write Excellent ELT Materials, Speaking Activities* (ELT Teacher 2 Writer)

Learn English with Friends – videos and speaking and listening activities

https://in.live.solas.britishcouncil.digital/sites/default/files/teacher_support_material.pdf

Pre A1 word list and posters

<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/351849-pre-a1-starters-word-list-2018.pdf>

Teaching speaking article <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/teaching-speaking-skills-1>

Teaching listening poster

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/B127c%20A1%20TE%20Staff%20ORoom%20Posters%202.pdf>

Thank you!
Questions?

