

Oracy Assessment
Group Talk Task: Talking Points
Initial and End-of-Year Assessments

Instructions for Teachers

This material is based, with kind permission, on the work of Lyn Dawes.



Talking Points are statements about a topic which may be accurate, contentious or downright wrong. They stimulate talk about the topic, as members of a group can explain whether and why they agree or disagree with a statement. This activity should therefore show how well students are able to take part in a group discussion.

Talking Points offer ways into thinking more deeply about a subject under discussion. They potentially enable everyone to say what is in their minds, so that others can decide whether they agree or disagree. They should stimulate the kind of talk which will reveal students' oracy skills in group discussions.

Group activity

Students should be in groups of three. They are given a list of Talking Points and their task is to select the item or items that they want to discuss. They then need to engage in the discussion, hopefully providing reasons for their views. One student should read the Talking Points to the others; if all are fluent readers, members of the group can take turns. They should be aware that speaking and listening, not reading, is the focus. When they have read through all the items, they should select the first one for discussion.

Having discussed one item, the students should select another and move on to discussing that. Let them talk for up to 10 minutes, depending upon whether they

exhaust the topics for discussion. It does not matter whether or not the students discuss all the Talking Points.

Procedures and assessment

For the *initial task* you should pick one of the three Talking Points (Talk, Money or the Environment) for the students to use. For the *end-of-year task* the Talking Point used should be one of the others. If the main topic for either task fails to engage a group, you might use the 'spare' Talking Point as a replacement.

It is important not to assign group roles (e.g. chair, questioner, etc.) to any of the students prior to carrying out the assessment, as one of the items that you will be assessing is the students' capacity to guide or manage the interactions in the group.

Start by reading out the 'Instructions for students' and check that they understand what they have to do.

Please note that two of the skills being assessed are 'building on the views of others' and 'giving reasons to support views'. In this assessment you should focus on how clearly each student articulates their reasoning, rather than on their level of understanding of the topic.

Oracy Assessment Protocol

Group Talk Task: Talking Points

For each skill, a student is assessed on a three-way, GOLD/SILVER/BRONZE scale:

GOLD means 'consistently demonstrates this skill'.

SILVER means 'demonstrates this skill some of the time'.

BRONZE means 'rarely or never demonstrates this skill yet'.

Make notes below during the task to help with your ratings.

Student A	Student B	Student C

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Assessment – Talking Points

Oracy Skill	Student A	Student B	Student C
Physical			
1 c) clarity of pronunciation			
2 b) facial expression and eye contact			
Linguistic			
4 a) register			
Cognitive			
7 b) building on the views of others			
8 b) summarising			
9 a) maintaining focus on task			
10 a) giving reasons to support views			
10 b) critically examining ideas and views expressed			
Social & Emotional			
12 a) guiding or managing the interactions			
12 b) turn-taking			
13 listening actively and responding appropriately			
Overall assessment			