



# 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.~~

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# 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)

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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?

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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.

# mirror

Mirrors come in all sorts of sizes and shapes. They play an important role in many occupations as well as in some famous stories.

## Talk Time

Use a handheld mirror with a frame and a handle for this Talk Time session. You might also show other kinds of mirrors for comparison. If you can, include one that has magnification properties.

### Vocabulary

frame, handle, reflection, shapes (circle, oval, rectangle), colors, sizes (bigger, smaller), materials (wood, plastic, glass), occupations (dentist, hairstylist)

## DESCRIBING

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

- ◆ What shape is this mirror?
- ◆ What color is the frame?
- ◆ What is the frame made of?
- ◆ What is the mirror itself made of? (glass)
- ◆ Does the mirror have a handle?
- ◆ What do you use a mirror for? What is a reflection?
- ◆ What is reflected in a mirror?
- ◆ Are mirrors breakable?

## COMPARING

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

- ◆ Tell about a mirror you have in your house. How is it different from this one?

- ◆ What different shapes do mirrors have? (rectangle, oval, circle)
- ◆ What different sizes are they? (as big as a \_\_\_\_\_, small enough to fit in a \_\_\_\_\_)
- ◆ Do all mirrors have frames? What kinds of frames are there?
- ◆ Where do you find mirrors? (car, bathroom, purse, dressing rooms, sliding doors, etc.)
- ◆ Some mirrors are two-sided. How is the image different on the back side? (magnified, enlarged)

## EXTENDING

Go beyond physical description and typical uses.

- ◆ If the mirror is made of glass, why can't we see right through it?
- ◆ What other things reflect like a mirror? A lake I know is called Mirror Lake. Why do you think it is called that?
- ◆ What kinds of people use mirrors as part of their job? (dentists, truck drivers, hair stylists, spys...)
- ◆ The wicked queen in Snow White said,  
 "Mirror, mirror on the wall  
 Who is the fairest of them all?"  
 Why did she say that? What did she find out?
- ◆ Have you ever used a mirror to see the back of your head? How can you do it?
- ◆ Is a mirror image different from the real thing? How?
- ◆ Have you ever seen a mirror in which the image is distorted? What did you see? Why is the image distorted?

# banana

The object of today's discussion is familiar to everyone. What will children find to say about this appealing fruit?

## Talk Time

Show a ripe banana for today's conversation. For comparison's sake, try to have a banana that is still noticeably green.

### Vocabulary

fruit, peel, ripe, bunch, texture (soft, mushy, smooth), foods (banana bread, smoothies, muffins), colors (white, yellow, green, black)

## DESCRIBING

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

- ◆ What colors are this banana?
- ◆ What kind of food are bananas? (fruit)
- ◆ Do you think this banana is ripe? How can you tell?
- ◆ What is the peel for? What do you do with it?
- ◆ How do bananas grow? (on trees)
- ◆ How do you buy bananas in the store? (in bunches)
- ◆ What does a banana feel like in your mouth? What other foods have a similar texture?
- ◆ What do bananas taste like?
- ◆ How do you like to eat/use bananas? (plain, sliced in cereal, banana bread, smoothies)

## COMPARING

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

- ◆ Are all bananas the same shape? size? color? Tell how bananas are like and different from each other.
- ◆ When bananas are green, what does that mean? How can you tell when a banana is ripe? What does it mean when a banana gets brown spots? black?
- ◆ Have you ever seen bananas at the store that are brown? What about bananas that are very short? Have you ever tried those types of bananas?
- ◆ How do you eat bananas most often—whole, sliced, mashed, or baked in a recipe?

## EXTENDING

Go beyond physical description and typical uses.

- ◆ Where do bananas come from? What countries do they grow in?
- ◆ Invent a new way to use bananas. Tell about your idea or recipe.
- ◆ What other fruits or vegetables have protective coverings that we peel off and don't usually eat?
- ◆ Name three fruits that you like better than bananas, and three fruits that you don't like as well as bananas.
- ◆ Have you ever heard the expression, "Make like a banana and split"? What does it mean? What's a banana split? What other meaning can the word *split* have?

# mug

Besides being a container for our favorite warm beverages, mugs are an interesting way to express our personalities. So many designs, pictures, and logos decorate our mugs; what's your personal favorite?

## **Talk Time**

Provide several different mugs from home. Select one to be the main focus of the Describing portion of the discussion, then bring the others out for the Comparing portion.

### **Vocabulary**

materials (glass, ceramic, plastic), logo, narrower, wider

## **DESCRIBING**

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

- ◆ What is this mug made of? What color(s) does it have on it?
- ◆ Tell about the pattern, picture, or design on this mug. Are there any words on it? What do they tell you about where this mug might have come from?
- ◆ What shape is this mug? Is it a typical shape for a cup like this? Is it narrower at the top or the bottom, or is it the same from top to bottom?
- ◆ Where do we usually keep mugs? What do we use them for?
- ◆ What color is the handle? Do you think it's a good size for your hand?

## **COMPARING**

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

- ◆ Do you have mugs at home? What pictures, patterns, or words do they have on them?

- ◆ Think of other items that are ceramic like a mug.
- ◆ What other materials can mugs be made from? Are all mugs the same shape?
- ◆ Tell about your favorite mug at home. What does it look like? What do you like to put in it?
- ◆ Think about other mugs you've seen. How are they like and different from this one?

## **EXTENDING**

Go beyond physical description and typical uses.

- ◆ If you were designing a mug for your mom or dad, what would it look like? What pictures, colors, or designs would you put on it? Why?
- ◆ What about a mug for your best friend? What would that be like?
- ◆ What else could you use a mug for? What would be a way to use one other than for drinking?
- ◆ Do all the mugs at your home look alike, or do you have a variety?
- ◆ Some companies use mugs for advertising. How do they do that? Why might a mug be good advertising?
- ◆ Where could you buy a mug? What types of stores or shops might sell them?

# candle

Candles come in so many colors, shapes, and sizes—this conversation is sure to be ablaze with rich and wonderful describing words.

## Talk Time

Show any type of candle for today’s Talk Time session. Also provide several other candles that are different from the first to “spark” children’s ideas for the Comparing and Extending portions of the discussion.

### Vocabulary

wick, scent, wax, uses (light, decoration, celebrations, scents, atmosphere), extinguish, snuffer, matches, lighter, mold, oxygen, fuel

## DESCRIBING

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

- ◆ What color is this candle? What words could you use to describe its size, shape, weight, pattern, etc.
- ◆ Does this candle have a smell? What does the scent remind you of?
- ◆ What is this candle made of? (wax)
- ◆ What is this string at the top called? (the wick) What is it for?
- ◆ Can this candle stand on its own, or does it need a candle holder?
- ◆ Do you think this candle could burn more than an hour, or less? Why do you think so?
- ◆ What do people use candles for? (light, decoration, birthday celebrations, nice smells, cozy atmosphere)
- ◆ How can you extinguish, or put out, a candle? (blow it out, use a snuffer)

## COMPARING

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

- ◆ What kinds of candles do you have at home? Does your family light them often, or are they mostly for decoration?
- ◆ What other kinds and shapes of candles have you seen? What kinds of candles need candle holders? How do birthday candles stand up?
- ◆ What do we always need when we use a candle? (matches or a lighter)

## EXTENDING

Go beyond physical description and typical uses.

- ◆ What do you know about how candles are made?
- ◆ If you could design an interesting shape for a candle, what would the mold look like? What color wax would you pour into the mold?
- ◆ What are some good safety rules to keep in mind when using candles?
- ◆ Where could we buy a candle? What types of stores might sell them?
- ◆ Why does the flame go out when you cover it with a candle snuffer? (no more oxygen to fuel the flame)

# globe

Today children will have the world at their fingertips as they explore and describe a globe.

## **Talk Time**

Use the classroom globe if you have one, or bring one in to show and share.

### **Vocabulary**

sphere, smooth, bumpy, elevation, rotate, continents, countries, cities, states, map, two-dimensional, three-dimensional

## **DESCRIBING**

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

- ◆ What is this thing called? What is it used for?
- ◆ What shape is this globe? (a sphere) What's the difference between something that's a circle and something that's a sphere?
- ◆ What colors do you see on this globe?
- ◆ Is this globe smooth or bumpy? Why would a globe be bumpy? (to show elevations)
- ◆ Why is there so much blue on this globe?
- ◆ What material do you think this globe is made of?
- ◆ What is the stand for? What if the globe didn't have a stand?
- ◆ Why is it important for the globe to rotate?
- ◆ Why is there a line around the center of the globe?
- ◆ What kind of writing do you see on it? What are the numbers for?

## COMPARING

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

- ◆ How are all globes similar? How might they be different?
- ◆ Where do you see globes most commonly?
- ◆ Does anyone have a globe at home? How does it compare to this globe in terms of size, shape, colors, etc.?
- ◆ How does a flat map of the world compare to a globe?

## EXTENDING

Go beyond physical description and typical uses.

- ◆ Can you locate our country on this globe? How about our state? Our city?
- ◆ Have you heard of 2-D (two-dimensional) and 3-D (three-dimensional)? Which shows the earth in 2-D, a map or a globe? Which shows the world in 3-D? Which is a more accurate representation of how the earth really looks?
- ◆ Who knows where Europe is on the globe? How could we get there from where we live? What forms of transportation would work?
- ◆ Where is Mexico? How could we get there from here?

# bar of soap

Smooth, scented, and so, so.....slippery! Soap is the topic of today's conversation.

## Talk Time

Show a fresh bar of bath soap.

### Vocabulary

imprinted, brand, shapes (square, rectangular, oval), scented, mold, lather

## DESCRIBING

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

- ◆ What color is this soap? Can you see anything imprinted in it?
- ◆ Is this a brand new bar of soap, or has it been used? How can you tell?
- ◆ How would you describe the shape of this bar of soap? Does it have straight or curvy edges? Is it in a particular shape?
- ◆ Is this soap scented? How would you describe the smell?

## COMPARING

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

- ◆ Do you use bars of soap at home? Where? What other types of soap do you use? (liquid soap, soap powder)
- ◆ What other colors do bars of soap come in?
- ◆ Have you ever seen bars of soap molded into special shapes such as hearts or flowers? Tell about those.

## EXTENDING

Go beyond physical description and typical uses.

- ◆ How do you make lather with a bar of soap?
- ◆ Do you know anything about how soap is made?
- ◆ If you could make a bar of soap, what color, shape, and scent would it have?