

Speaking and writing frames

EAL learners need support to structure their speaking and writing, to use new language forms and functions appropriately and consistently, and eventually to speak and write independently using appropriate genres.

Speaking frames provide models of sentence construction, language structures, and vocabulary for EAL learners to use orally within a curriculum context. They offer the opportunity for EAL learners to hear, repeat and explore new language through talk and listening. This both reinforces their understanding, and encourages accurate, effective communication. EAL learners should always have the opportunity to rehearse language orally before writing.

Writing frames provide a scaffold for writing in different genres. They model how EAL learners should organise their work, the language structures they need to use for a specific genre, as well as ways to link sentences or paragraphs. By using a writing frame EAL learners begin to gain familiarity with form and language relevant to a particular curriculum context, so that they can gradually use language appropriately to write independently.

Types of speaking and writing frames

- ◆ **Sentence starters** are a useful for example in practical subjects when learners are asked to evaluate a project they have taken part in, and say, or write, what they have learnt from the experience. They can be given a selection of sentence starters like: 'I learnt that...' 'One thing I discovered was...', 'I found out that...'
- ◆ **Sentence frames** are helpful when asking learners to organise their thoughts in a particular way, e.g. comparing and contrasting: 'One similarity between _____ and _____ is that...', 'A key distinction between _____ and _____ is that...'
- ◆ **Writing frames** can be used for pieces of extended writing, in which case learners can be given the first few words of each paragraph.

Practical ideas for using speaking and writing frames

- ✓ **Top tip:** Think how you would give or write a model answer
 ? **To consider:** What type of frame is appropriate to the level of
 the learners, and will extend them not constrain them?

- ◆ **Guided small group activity:** The teacher, or teaching assistant, explains the teaching objective and the language learning focus, then models new vocabulary and language structures. Opportunities are provided for lots of repetition through guided questioning. Learners use a speaking frame, which provides examples of the modelled language, so they can engage purposefully in the activity. This may be used to introduce language features of a new curriculum topic.
- ◆ **Pair work / talk partners:** EAL learners are paired with a good linguistic role model for a purposeful speaking activity (e.g. making predictions in science). The language learning focus is made explicit through the use of a speaking frame and is modelled. This ensures that talk is focused and accurate. Initially talk may seem contrived but the frame is gradually removed, so the EAL learner can practise creating sentences independently. This offers oral rehearsal for writing, and can also be used to check understanding of a curriculum topic.
- ◆ **Display writing or speaking frames** in the form of supportive mats, classroom posters (for reference), on the whiteboard, as worksheets, and for card sequencing activities whereby learners and teacher create their own scaffold for writing together. Always orally rehearse language structures for a writing frame first, as a class, small group, or in a pair work activity.
- ◆ **Sentence frames** can support language development across the curriculum. Provide and model a sentence frame on the whiteboard or a wall. Encourage learners to use the frame for speaking and in writing: e.g. to make predictions, offer cause effect statements, describe a process etc. They may be used as a starter or plenary.

- ◆ Sentence sequencing: EAL learners construct a writing frame together in groups or pairs, with a teacher or teaching assistant, through talk. This can be done at any age and for any EAL stage. The teacher models appropriate language. Learners can then decide together how to order the phrases to create their scaffold. E.g. First we put ... Then we added... Finally we...
- ◆ Develop speaking frames and writing frames alongside other strategies, such as barrier games, information gap activities, picture / sentence matching etc.

Good for EAL, Good for All: Can I use speaking and writing frames with the whole class?

Yes, definitely! They help learners to organise/structure their ideas, and to use language features appropriate to genre.