

The background of the page is a solid green color. It is decorated with several overlapping speech bubbles of varying shades of green, some being darker and some lighter, creating a layered effect. The speech bubbles are scattered across the page, with a higher concentration in the upper half.

Talk Boost KS2 Tracker

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The *Talk Boost KS2 Tracker* is a tool to check children's communication and language development against what's known to be typical in **Years 3 & 4** (ages 7–9) and **Years 5 & 6** (ages 9–11). If repeated over time it can also be used to show progress.

This Tracker has not been designed as a full language assessment, has not been standardised and does not replace specialist investigation by a speech and language therapist.

The Tracker covers the most important areas of language and communication relating to functional use of language, particularly in the classroom. These language and communication skills are important as they reflect children's personal, social and emotional development, including their ability to be independent, self sufficient and make relationships. All these skills are important for children to learn in school.

The Tracker is divided into four sections and combines **Questions** and **Observations**.

The four sections are:

- **Listening carefully:** listening and attention skills expected at this age.
- **Vocabulary:** strategies that children use to help them learn and remember new words.
- **Telling stories and saying what happens:** use of grammar and the ability to join sentences and construct a simple, clear narrative.
- **Working with others and having conversations:** use of language in the classroom with other children.

Using the Tracker

The **items in blue** in the Tracker reflect what is typical for most 7–9 year olds (Years 3 & 4) and 10–11 year olds (Years 5 & 6) with normally developing skills.

Because children develop language skills at different rates, some may be slightly ahead or behind these levels; children who are greatly behind may benefit from additional support.

At ages 7 (Years 3 & 4) and 9 (Years 5 & 6), the language skills of most children won't be as advanced, and this is reflected in the scoring. The Tracker is based on age-related norms to help to differentiate between children whose skills are age-appropriate and those who may benefit from targeted or specialist support.

Each section of the Tracker contains a number of Questions and Observations of how the child functions in school (except for **Working with others and having conversations**, which is entirely based on Observations). All the items are based on research evidence for children's language development (based on native English speakers). See the **References** on page 69 for more information.

Make sure to complete all four sections, and all the Questions and Observations, to develop a profile of the child's communication and language skills across these key areas and ensure that areas of concern are not missed.

If the child struggles with the questions, despite repetition and encouragement, then move on to the next section. Score the child 0 for items not attempted.

Resources

All pictures are included at the end of the Tracker		
	Years 3 & 4	Years 5 & 6
Timer (to time one minute)	Vocabulary: Question 3	Vocabulary: Question 2
Recording device, e.g. tablet computer (you're advised to record what the child says, so that you can transcribe it later)	Telling stories and saying what happens: Questions 1 and 3	Telling stories and saying what happens: All questions

Online scoring

Online scoring for the Tracker is available at www.talkboostks2tracker.org.uk

Follow the instructions to register and set up your school's details. By entering your groups' data you'll be able to obtain a report showing the children's progress. You can use these reports as evidence for governing bodies and Ofsted of the outcome of *Talk Boost KS2*; and the reports are especially useful where funding (such as Pupil Premium) has been used to pay for the intervention.

At I CAN we continuously strive to gather feedback and impact evidence on how our programmes are working post-pilot and to refine our materials. By using the online scoring for the Tracker you are supporting us with this. From time to time we'll also make changes to the Tracker, and you can download and print copies of the latest Tracker from the website.

Demonstrating the Tracker

A short video of a TA and child completing the **Vocabulary** and **Telling stories and saying what happens** sections of the Tracker / Years 3 & 4 is available at www.talkboostks2.org.uk

The **Vocabulary** section runs from 00.00–04.20 and the **Telling stories** section runs from 04.21–07.00.

Points to note:

- The TA is using a clock to help her time one minute during the **Vocabulary** section.
- The TA is using a tablet to record the **Telling stories** section. Otherwise she may have struggled to write down all the information without interfering with the fluency of the child's story.
- The TA provides some prompts and examples and makes some encouraging noises.
- Be careful about using praise. Use neutral, encouraging feedback, e.g. 'Thank you/Let's move on to the next question'. Avoid saying whether the response is right or wrong.
- Record any additional relevant comments, e.g. the child says 'I forgot the word'.
- When recording, note any behaviours you observe that may be related to the child's language skills, e.g. the child acts using the sword.
- Make sure you allow some thinking time in the storytelling part of the **Telling stories** section.
- If the child is struggling, bring the assessment to a close.
- Transcribe the recording on to the Tracker as soon as possible so you remember the context and understand what the child is saying.

Administering the Tracker

- The Tracker is designed to help you measure the progress a child makes following *Talk Boost KS2*. Administer the Tracker before the intervention starts and again after it's completed. The online scoring system will compare the **before** and **after** scores and calculate how much progress the child has made in each area.
- Make sure you use the correct section for the child's age: either **Years 3 & 4** or **Years 5 & 6**. Use the same age group Tracker after *Talk Boost KS2* has been completed.
- Start with the **Listening carefully** section and ask the Questions, following the instructions carefully.
- Do the same for the other sections (except for **Working with others and having conversations**, which is based on Observations only).
- Read through each of the Observations and score them carefully, according to what you know about the child and how they normally behave. You don't need the child with you for this part. It may be helpful to discuss the Observations with other adults who know the child in the classroom.

Scoring the Tracker

- Add the scores for the Questions and Observations to find the total in each section. Write them on the BEFORE score summary when you use the Tracker before *Talk Boost KS2*, and on the AFTER score summary when you repeat the Tracker after the intervention. (If you use the online Tracker the scores will be added automatically.)
- Add the scores from each section to give the overall score and write this at the bottom of the score summary. (Likewise, the online Tracker will do this for you.)

Interpreting Tracker scores

- For each of the four sections, identify the category for the child on the score summary. **Working towards age expectations** has three sub-sections to give more information about the child's level of attainment. This also helps you to prioritise children for the *Talk Boost KS2* groups and monitor their progress closely.
- For the overall total score, identify the category for the child and the action to take (see below).
- Due to the nature of language and communication it's possible that some children will have a **mixed profile** with scores for each section in different categories. Such children may also benefit from taking part in a *Talk Boost KS2* group. Consider which children have the greatest need and how many groups you can run at the same time or over the year.
- Some children, especially if they have some scores in the **Working below age expectations** category, need careful monitoring. If they don't make as much progress as other children in the group it's worth reflecting on their Tracker scores before and after *Talk Boost KS2*, and then seeking advice from a speech and language therapist.

Working below age expectations

The child has significant difficulty in one or more areas of language and communication which needs further investigation and possibly a referral to a speech and language therapist.

Working towards age expectations

The child has language and communication skills lower than would be expected for this age group and will benefit from *Talk Boost KS2* to further develop their communication and language skills. If the child has just completed *Talk Boost KS2* and made progress, but still falls within this range, they will benefit from continued targeted support within class using the strategies introduced in the intervention.

Working at age expectations

The child has age-appropriate language and communication skills; continue to support their further development through quality first teaching.

References

The developmental statements on which the Tracker Questions and Observations are based have been taken from I CAN's language development poster for Primary years, 'What's typical talk at Primary?' which itself was based on research and knowledge of communication development, including the following.

Attention and listening skills:

- Cooper, Moody & Reynell (1978) *Helping language development: A developmental programme for children with early language handicaps*. London: Edward Arnold Publishers.

Vocabulary:

- Berk, L.E. (2003) *Child development*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Word category criterion scores:

- Semel, E., Wiig, E. & Secord, W. (2013) *Clinical evaluation of language fundamentals – fifth edition (CELF-5)*. Pearson Clinical Assessment.

Speech sounds/phonological development:

- Caroline Bowen website: <http://speech-language-therapy.com/>
- Hatcher, P., Duff, J. & Hulme, C. (2014) *Sound linkage: An integrated programme for overcoming reading difficulties*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Narrative development:

- Applebee, A. (1978) *The child's concept of a story: Ages 2 to 17*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- McMahon, F. & Farquhar, A. (2001) 'Assessment of narrative', from *An introduction to working with narrative – annual study day*, Eastern Region SIG in Developmental Language Disorder.

Other:

- Locke, A. (1989) *Living language*. NFER.
- Education Queensland language checklists.

