

Ten Warm-up Ideas for Speech, Language and Communication Interventions and Activities

1. I went shopping and bought a... [Age 4+]

[Supports young people to practice: auditory memory skills, listening and attention, turn taking]

One person starts by saying, "I went shopping and I bought a ..." (names a food item). The second player says, "I went shopping and I bought ..." and repeats the first player's item before adding their own. The third player continues, saying the first two items before adding their own. And so on. See how many you can remember. A variation of this game is: "I went on holiday and I packed ..."

Make it easier: Provide pictures of shopping items or pretend food to choose from and each child keeps their chosen picture / pretend food item in front of them as a visual support to help the next children remember.

Make it more challenging: Complete more than one round of the game, e.g. go around the circle twice to increase the number of items to remember.



2. Guess who? [Age 4+]

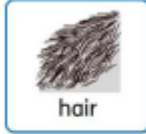
[Supports young people to practice: listening and attention, inference skills, asking questions]

One person thinks of a person or character [this may be the adult facilitator to begin with]. Everyone else tries to guess who the person is by asking questions.

Tips:

- Provide a selection of pictures or photos to choose from, for example, 8 animal photos or 8 different occupations.
- Link it to a story you are learning about, for example, say you are going to choose one of the characters from Little Red Riding Hood or The Gruffalo.
- Once children have learnt how to play, let them take turns choosing a character while everyone else asks questions.
- To make it easier, use the visual below to talk about questions they could ask about animals.

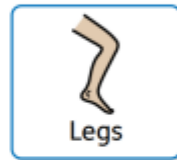
Questions you can ask to guess the animal



**What is its
fur, skin or
hair like?**

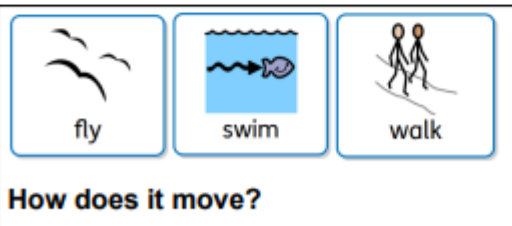


**What colour
is it?**



**How many
legs does
it have?**

Where does it live?





3. In the manner of the word ... [KS1 +]

[Supports young people to practice: vocabulary, imaginative roleplay, social interaction]

Choose four to six adverbs (eg slowly, painfully, joyously, speedily, messily, quietly and sadly) and write them on the board. Go through what each of the adverbs means, you could ask – ‘What is something that you might do **slowly**’, for example. Pick one of the adverbs, such as sadly and one of the actions. The students act out the action ‘in the manner of...’ the adverb. For example, ‘dancing speedily.’

To make this more challenging: students take turns to pick an action and adverb from a hat, then act it out. For example, Isaac acts out making a cup of tea as sadly as he can. The other pupils guess the action and adverb from the list on the board.

You can use online spinners to generate your actions and adverbs too: [► Double Spinner Wheel » Spin Two Wheels on this Dual Spinner](#)

Adverb examples: slowly, painfully, joyously, speedily, messily, quietly, sadly, energetically, loudly, dramatically, sternly, happily, sedately, reluctantly, solemnly, vainly, gracefully, blindly, covertly, hastily, boldly, wildly, daintily, sleepily, thoughtfully, jokingly, proudly, suspiciously, rapidly, wearily, angrily, dejectedly, chivalrously, shakily, sheepishly, rudely, elegantly, intensely, mysteriously,

Task examples (for either one child or several children) to carry out the action or pretend to: • write ‘The cat sat on the mat’ on the board • walk across the classroom • dance • make a cup of tea, • have a drink • get dressed • brush your hair/teeth • pick some flowers and give them to someone • have a wash • talk to each other on the phone • ask your mum if you can go out and see a friend • climb on a climbing frame • blow out birthday candles and cut the cake • buy an icecream • have a conversation on the bus • swim

(This game has been taken from the Word Aware ‘Word Games for Schools’ pack by A. Branagan & S. Parsons 2020)

4. Add an adjective [Age 4+]

[Supports young people to practice: vocabulary, turn taking, listening and attention]

Place several interesting objects in a bag. Ask a participant to pick one of the items. Pass the item around the circle with each person adding an adjective to describe the object. As the item is passed around, the participants add their adjective to the previous adjectives.

For example:

Object = A shoe

- Person 1: Red Shoe
- Person 2: Sparkly, red shoe
- Person 4: Small, sparkly, red shoe
- Person 5: Shiny, small, sparkly red shoe

5. Fold-a-character [KS1 +]

[Supports young people to practice: turn taking, storytelling and narrative skills, vocabulary]

To begin, you are going to fold a piece of paper into 4 parts [portrait orientation]. As a group, you are going to create a character. The first person is going to draw a head, the second person draws the torso [shoulders to waist], the third person draws the legs and the final person draws the feet. *[It can be helpful for each person to draw small lines to continue their part for the next person e.g. extending the neck a little beyond the fold so it is easier for the next person to join up their part.]* Unfold the character and discuss! Think as a group about the character – decide together on a name, age and other facts about it such as what it eats and where it lives.



6. Spot the Difference: [Age 4+]

[Supports young people to practice: turn taking, listening and attention, social interaction skills]

In this game, one person in the group is 'detective' and is sent outside the room or closes their eyes. Meanwhile, one of the remaining group members is going to change something about their appearance. The 'detective' returns and must 'spot the difference' by saying what has changed. It is useful for the adult practitioner to model changing something about their appearance first to support children to understand.

Make it easier: Provide props or costume items such as hats, scarfs or feather boas so that the change is more obvious.



7. Category Game [Age 4+]

[Supports young people to practice: vocabulary]

In this game, you [or one of the young people] is going to choose a category. Set a timer for 1 – 2 minutes. The aim is for the participants to think of as many words as possible for that category. The adult practitioner should write the words down and count them at the end. Try to beat the previous number of words next time!

You could use online spinners to generate categories: [Spin the Wheel – Free and easy-to-use random picker. Add names or options, spin to decide. Save and share instantly.](#) combined with online timers, or pull the categories out of a bag and use a timer you have in school.

Animals	Clothes	Furniture	Food	Transport
Sports	Countries	Shops	Parts of the body	Computer games
Films	T.V. programmes	Famous people	Anything to do with Christmas	Books
Something you cut	Something you can smell	Something you wear when it is hot	Something you can see on a beach	Songs
Somewhere you go on holiday	Something you would see at the zoo	Things you use or wear when playing sport	Things you could do with a piece of paper	Something red/ green/ blue
Something starting with 'p' (or any other letter)	Something with legs	Something you would find in a handbag	Things in a classroom	Things you could buy in a supermarket that isn't food
Shoes	Things that are cold	Insects	Things that grow	Musical instruments
Boy's/ girl's name	Cartoon characters	Famous sports men/ women	Verbs (doing words)	Adjectives (describing words)
Things that are thin	Things that are round/ square	Breakable objects	Things that can fly	Things with wheels
Toys	Things you plug in	Emotions	Pets	Jobs
Things that make you laugh	Things that are fast	Breakfast foods	Things that are exciting/ exhilarating	Things that open
Things that are boring	Liquids /things you can pour	Things that rhyme with tea/ cat/ light.	Drinks	Things that are light (not heavy)

(This game has been taken from the Word Aware 'Word Games for Schools' pack by A. Branagan & S. Parsons 2020)

8. Kim's Game [Age 4+]

[Supports young people to practice: auditory memory skills, vocabulary]

The adult facilitator is going to place a number of items on a tray. You can adapt the number of items to suit the young people you are working with – the more items, the more challenging the game will be. Give the young people one minute to look at the items on the tray. Cover the tray with a tea towel / fabric. Ask the young people to say what objects they can remember from the tray.



Tips:

- *Tell children the number of items in the tray so that they know how many they are aiming to remember.*
- *Older children can write the objects they remember on a whiteboard independently and then you can discuss it as a group.*
- *Choosing objects from the same category is helpful for vocabulary development. Examples include: things we have in the classroom, things we find outside, things we use to look after ourselves, foods, items from the kitchen, and so on.*
- *It doesn't matter if a young person doesn't remember everything – If they get stuck you can give them clues, for example; it's something blue, or it's very soft.*

9. Design a book cover for... [KS1+]

[Supports young people to practice: storytelling and narrative skills]

In this activity, young people are going to imagine that their school trip, morning or other real-life event was a storybook. They are going to design a front cover for it. Before they start, talk about what might feature on the front cover. You could look at some front covers from familiar stories as an example too. Talk about the following points and if needed, support the children to plan their front cover:

- **The purpose of a front cover:** *It gives the reader an idea of what the book might be about*
- **Characters:** *A front cover often features people or animals who were in the story*
- **Setting:** *Think about where your real-life event took place*
- **Key events:** *For older children, you might discuss what the key problem in the story is or an event that might intrigue the reader*
- **Title:** *You could also make up a title for the story of your weekend / school trip / other real-life event*

Examples of real-life events:



- ... The school trip
- ... Your morning
- ... The school visit
- ... Today at school
- ... Your weekend
- ... The holidays
- ... The school show

10. Headline generator game or title generator game [KS1+]

[Supports young people to practice: storytelling and narrative skills]

This activity is similar to the 'Design a book cover' activity above. Ask the young people to think about a real-life event such as:

- ... The school trip
- ... Your morning
- ... The school visit
- ... Today at school
- ... Your weekend
- ... The holidays
- ... The school show

Ask children to think about who was there, where they were and what happened. Ask them to imagine that the story of their morning / school trip / other real-life event was either an article in a newspaper or being made into a book. Can they think of a good headline or title for their article / book?

Tip: You could also generate headlines for events in fictional stories, for example, what would the headline be for a particular part of Three Billy Goats Gruff?