



CAMBRIDGE

Oracy in the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework



Cambridge
Life Competencies

What is Oracy?

Oracy encompasses the skills that enable effective spoken communication across contexts and for different audiences. It enables learners to articulate their thoughts clearly, deepen their thinking through dialogue and participate confidently in discussions and presentations. Oracy skills can be broken down into physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional aspects (Mercer & Dawes, 2018; Voice21 & Oracy Cambridge, 2019).

In practice, this might look like:

- Actively listening to others and responding appropriately
- Expressing ideas clearly through use of voice, language and body language
- Structuring and organising spoken communication
- Actively engaging in constructive and collaborative dialogue
- Approaching different viewpoints with both critical evaluation and curiosity
- Adapting language and communication style to the situation

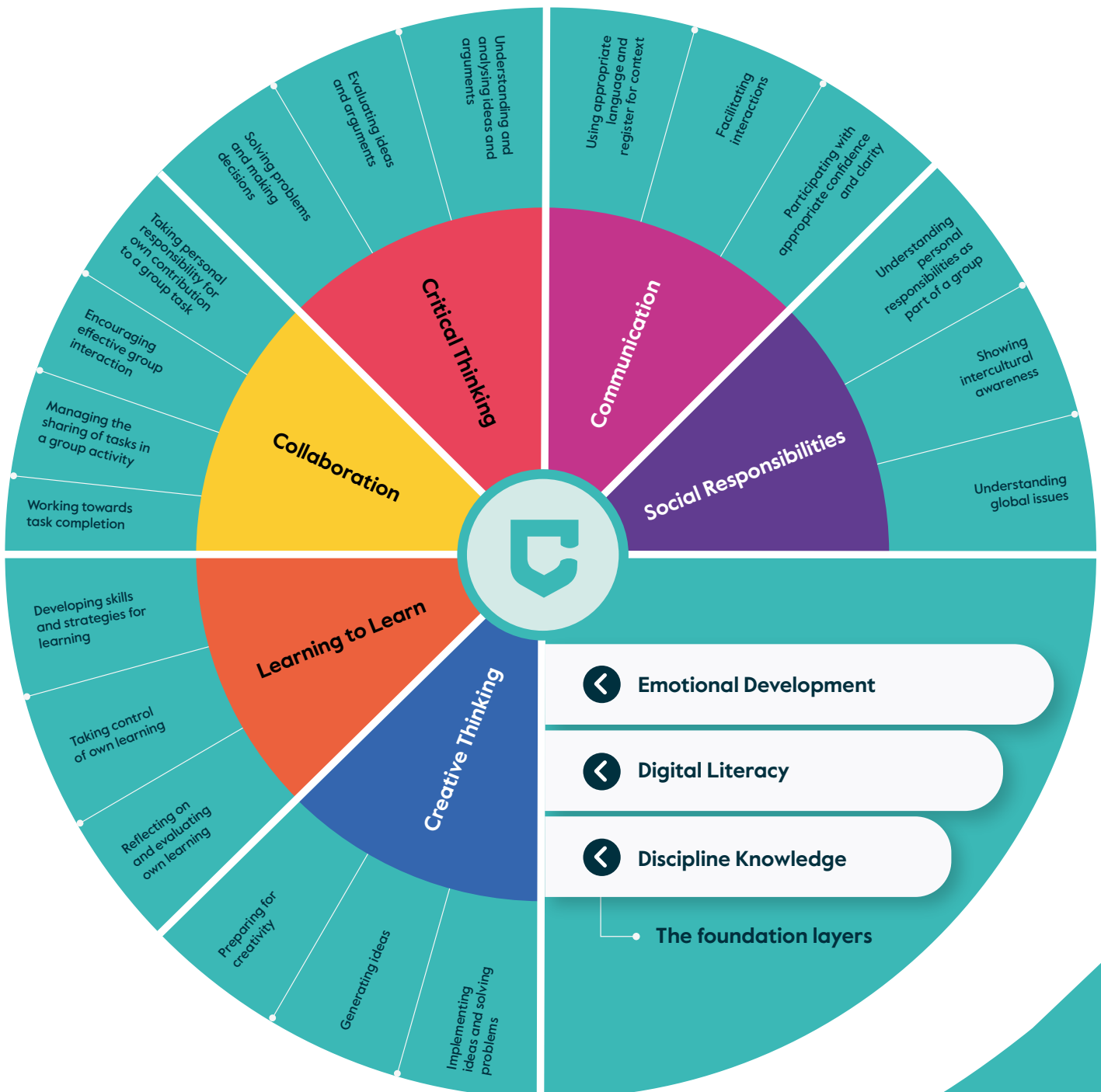
Where can Oracy be found in the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework?

The Oracy elements are most present in the **Communication** competency. Although the elements of Oracy could be mapped to multiple components within this competency, the mapping below shows only the component to which each element is **most** strongly aligned.

| Competency | Core areas | Components | Oracy elements included |
|---------------|---|--|---|
| Communication | Using appropriate language and register for context | Using language appropriate for the situation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting language and communication style to the situation |
| | Facilitating interactions | Using communication strategies to facilitate conversations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively listening to others and responding appropriately Actively engaging in constructive and collaborative dialogue Approaching different viewpoints with both critical evaluation and curiosity |
| | Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity | Structuring spoken and written texts effectively | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structuring and organising spoken communication |
| | | Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressing ideas clearly through use of voice, language and body language |

In addition, the other competencies of the framework are linked to Oracy in the following ways:

- **Creative thinking:** Developing creative thinking skills helps learners find innovative ways to express their ideas (e.g. through different metaphors) and experiment with different communication styles. It also helps them develop curiosity and learn to find connections between ideas.
- **Critical thinking:** These skills help learners evaluate the points others present as well as their own ideas. They also help them justify their own arguments effectively.
- **Learning to learn:** Enhancing learning to learn and metacognitive skills enables learners to reflect on their speaking experiences, helping them to continuously improve their Oracy skills.
- **Collaboration:** Learners with strong collaboration skills will be able to create the conditions needed to explore ideas together and have a productive discussion.
- **Social responsibilities:** Strong Oracy skills enable learners to participate meaningfully in discussions about global issues, express diverse perspectives respectfully, and collaborate across cultures to develop solutions to shared challenges.
- **Emotional development:** Strong emotional awareness and regulation help learners manage speaking anxiety, respond empathetically to others in conversation, and build the confidence needed for effective oral communication.
- **Digital literacy:** Oracy skills transfer directly to online environments, supporting effective communication in video calls, virtual collaboration, digital presentations, and appropriate interaction across various digital platforms and contexts.



What does Oracy look like at each stage of learning?

The tables below include some example Can Do statements and language from the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework that could be used in materials to develop competencies around Oracy for each stage of learning. These are not intended to be comprehensive. For further ideas on how to develop Oracy competencies, please see the **Further resources** section at the end of this booklet.

Pre-primary

| Competency | Core areas | Components | Example Can Do statements | Example language |
|---------------|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| Communication | Using appropriate language and register for context | Using language appropriate for the situation | Uses simple, polite forms of greetings, introductions and farewells. | Hello!/Please/Thank you! |
| | Facilitating interactions | Using communication strategies to facilitate conversations | Builds on others' ideas (e.g. in a role-play activity). | And he [lives] ... |
| | | | Takes turns when speaking. | And you? |
| | | | Judges whether something is true or not. | True!/False! |
| | Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity | Structuring spoken and written texts effectively | Links ideas when speaking using simple connectors. | ... and/but ... |
| | | Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency | Asks and answers simple questions with confidence. | What's your name?/It's ... |

Primary

| Competency | Core areas | Components | Example Can Do statements | Example language |
|---------------|---|--|--|------------------------------|
| Communication | Using appropriate language and register for context | Using language appropriate for the situation | Uses appropriate tone and language when talking with others. | Good idea! |
| | Facilitating interactions | Using communication strategies to facilitate conversations | Interrupts politely at appropriate moments in group talk. | Please can I speak now? |
| | | | Ensures everyone in the group gives their opinion. | What do you think, [Ana]? |
| | | | Judges whether something is true or not, and gives a reason. | I don't think so because ... |
| | Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity | Structuring spoken and written texts effectively | Uses connectors to add additional points. | Also, ... |
| | | Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency | Tells a story or describes something clearly. | My story is ... |

Secondary

| Competency | Core areas | Components | Example Can Do statements | Example language |
|---------------|---|--|---|---|
| Communication | Using appropriate language and register for context | Using language appropriate for the situation | Adapts register and formality appropriately for different speaking contexts. | Hi!/Good afternoon, everyone. |
| | Facilitating interactions | Using communication strategies to facilitate conversations | Respectfully listens to others and waits for their turn to speak. | That's a really good point. I'd also say ... |
| | | | Uses appropriate strategies to develop a conversation (e.g. showing interest; giving non-minimal responses; or asking follow-up questions). | Can you tell me more about ... ? |
| | | | Identifies evidence and its reliability. | You said that [20% of students cheat in exams]. Can I ask [where this statistic is from]? |
| | Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity | Structuring spoken and written texts effectively | Develops a clear description or narrative with a logical sequence of points. | When ... /After ... / Before ... |
| | | Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency | Uses facial expressions and eye contact appropriately to support verbal communication. | N/A |

Higher education

| Competency | Core areas | Components | Example Can Do statements | Example language |
|---------------|---|--|---|---|
| Communication | Using appropriate language and register for context | Using language appropriate for the situation | Appropriately expresses a point of view. | Personally, ... |
| | Facilitating interactions | Using communication strategies to facilitate conversations | Responds in an open-minded way to different ideas, including those which represent an opposing point of view. | I see [what you're saying]. I'm interested to know more about ... |
| | | | Keeps a discussion moving by periodically summarising and moving to the next topic. | So far we've discussed ... and Let's now move on to ... |
| | | | Checks clarity, relevance and fairness of different arguments and points of view. | Can you explain how this relates to ... ? |
| | Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity | Structuring spoken and written texts effectively | Organises spoken and written text logically and thematically. | Firstly, ... /Secondly, ... / Finally, ... |
| | | Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency | Varies pace, volume and emphasis strategically during presentations to engage the audience. | N/A |

At work

| Competency | Core areas | Components | Example Can Do statements | Example language |
|---------------|---|--|--|---|
| Communication | Using appropriate language and register for context | Using language appropriate for the situation | Appropriately expresses a point of view. | To me, it's a matter of ... |
| | Facilitating interactions | Using communication strategies to facilitate conversations | Gives appropriate constructive feedback to colleagues. | I especially like how you've ... To give this section more impact, you could consider ... |
| | | | Interrupts a colleague appropriately in a meeting when necessary. | Could I just add something? |
| | | | Uses questions to evaluate the assumptions behind points in an argument. | What are we assuming is true when we make this assertion? |
| | Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity | Structuring spoken and written texts effectively | Uses discourse markers and signposting language to structure spoken presentations clearly. | To begin, ... / Furthermore, ... / In summary, ... |
| | | Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency | Chooses a presentation style that is suited to their audience. | First, let me set the scene. |

Further resources*

Cambridge University Press & Assessment's Primary ELT course *Cambridge Primary Path* incorporates an Oracy strand <https://www.cambridge.org/gb/cambridgeenglish/catalog/primary/cambridge-primary-path>

Cambridge University Press & Assessment's Secondary ELT course *Shining Lights* incorporates an Oracy strand <https://englishpages.cambridge.org/en/shining-lights-2025>

Mercer, N. & Dawes, L. (2018) The development of Oracy skills in school-aged learners. Part of the Cambridge Papers in ELT series. [pdf] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: https://www.cambridge.org/gb/files/7615/7488/3767/CambridgePapersInELT_Oracy_2018_ONLINE.pdf

Voice21 and Oracy Cambridge. (2019). *The Oracy Skills Framework and Glossary*. <https://oracycambridge.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/The-Oracy-Skills-Framework-and-Glossary.pdf>

Oracy Cambridge website <https://oracycambridge.org/>

Oracy Education Commission. (2024). *We need to talk. The report of the Commission on the Future of Oracy Education in England*. <https://oracyeducationcommission.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Future-of-Oracy-v23-web-13.pdf>

* Please note, these resources are current at the time of publishing – January 2026. However, newer resources may be available at the time of reading and/or some of the links included may no longer work.

Suggested search terms: 'Oracy' 'exploratory talk' 'dialogic teaching'



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