National Literacy Trust

Change your story

Talk for reading

Reading and Oracy – a match made in heaven

At the **National Literacy Trust**, we believe that oracy should be integrated through all education phases and subjects of the national curriculum, as spoken language has a mutually reinforcing relationship with children's reading and writing skills development.

The National Literacy trust: Creating confident communicators: How the government can help every child find their voice 2024

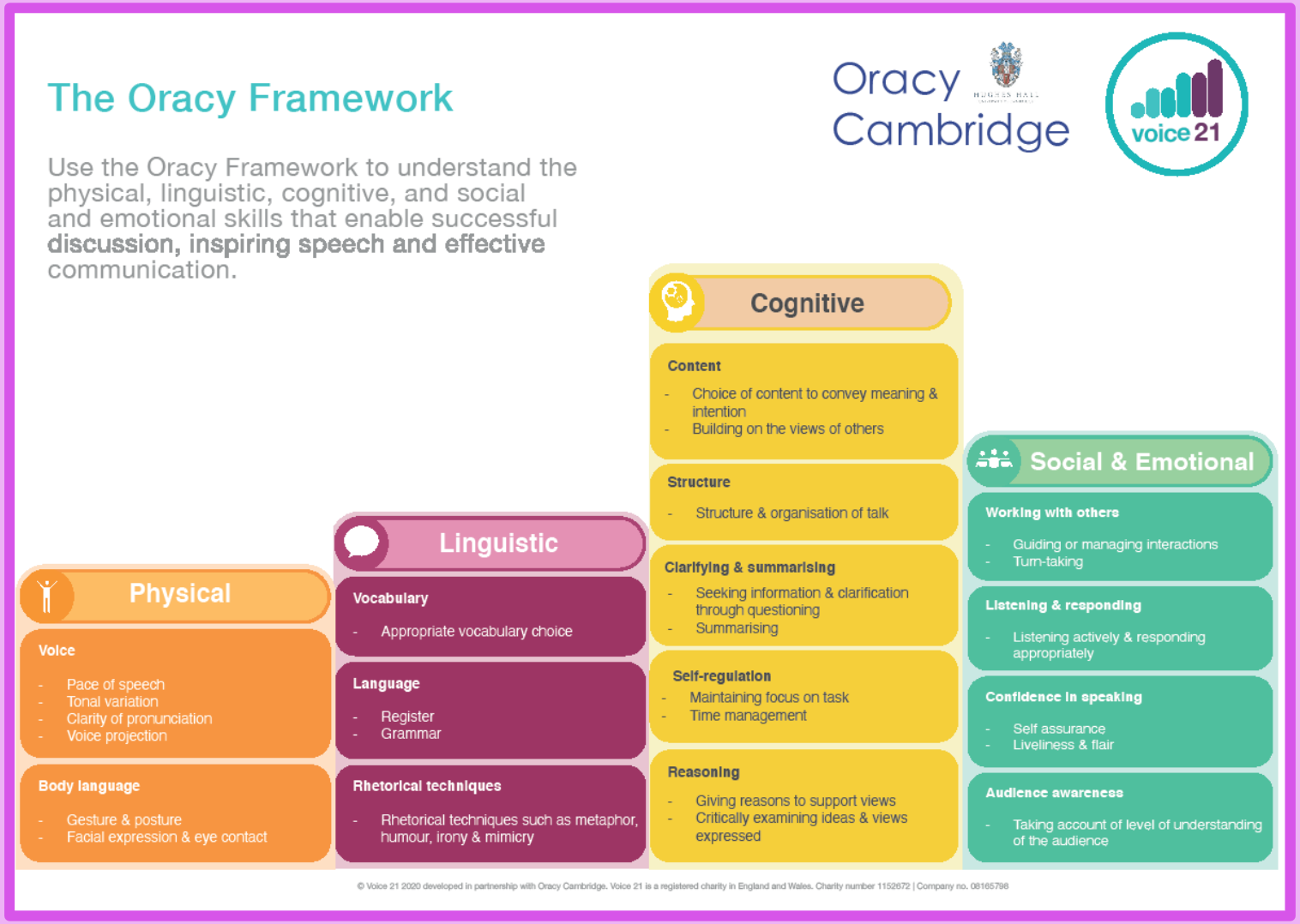
Reading and Oracy together

Making the reading process visible

Dialogic discussion

Quality texts

Prior knowledge, prediction, visualisation, empathy, ability to summarise, clarification



Booktalk

Questioning

Inference making

Vocabulary

Metacognition and self regulation

Copyright © by Voice 21. All rights to the content of this material are reserved and owned by Voice 21. Permission is granted to reproduce for personal or educational use only. Commercial copying, enhancing or selling is prohibited

Choosing a high-quality text

What does a high-quality text look like?

Who are our pupils?

What should they see when they read?

What skills should the text address?



Choosing a high-quality text



Diversity

Variety

Reflect the realities of the pupils

Offer a window into a new experience or reality

Spark interest and curiosity, building motivation to read

Build knowledge, skills, and vocabulary

Multi-modal, encouraging all to have a successful reading experience

A text that can be explored in a variety of ways and for a range of ages

What is your learning outcome?

An example:
a learning outcome based around building inference as a skill could be directly supported by the cognitive strand of the oracy framework, particularly looking at the 'choice of content to convey meaning and intention' (**Voice 21** Oracy Framework).

Copyright © by Voice 21.

Structuring the learning

Before

Prior knowledge and shared experience from which meaning can grow

During

Opportunities for clarification of meaning, ongoing prediction, vocabulary and enjoyment

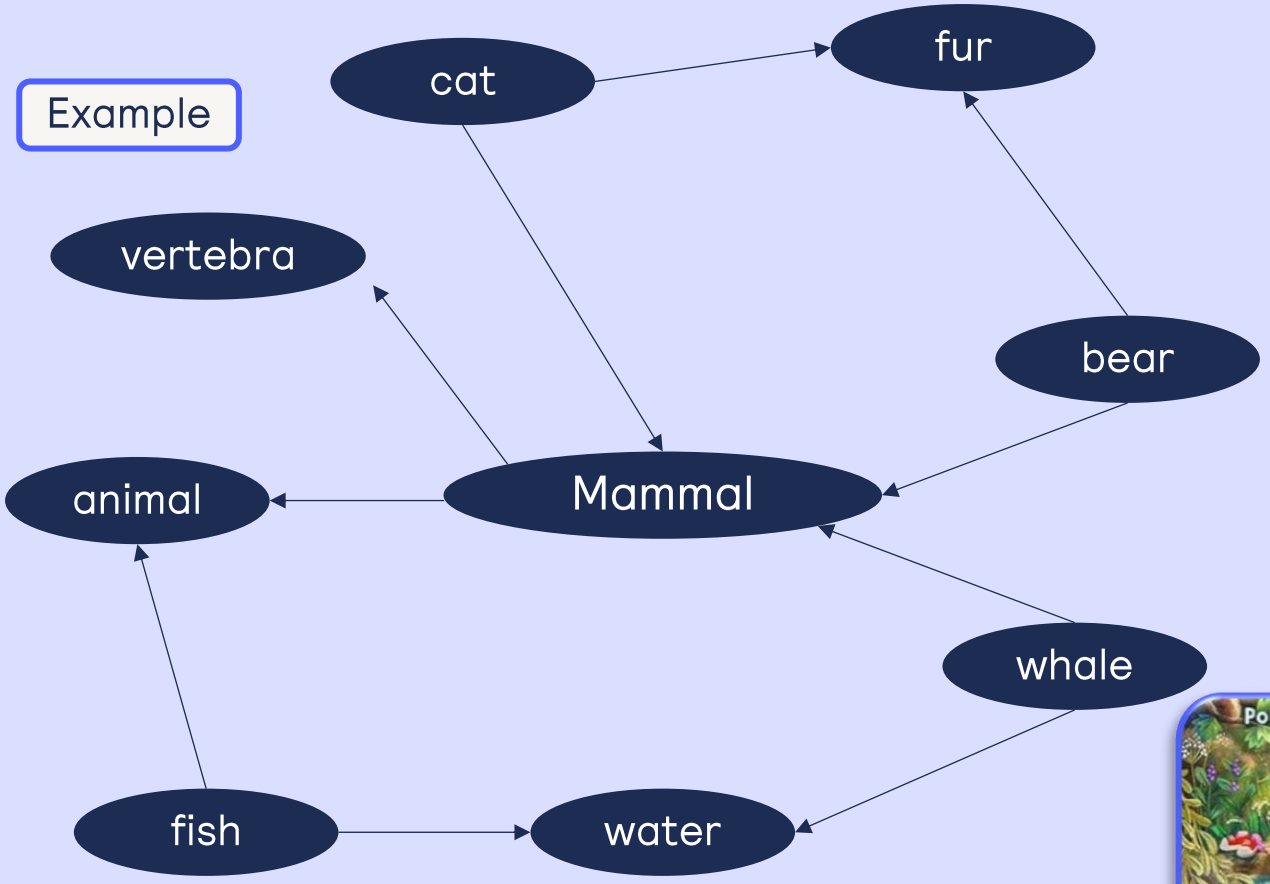
After

Consolidation of vocabulary, further elaborative inference making, and evaluative thinking

Semantic webs

Before

Example



The Girl who Became a Fish

By Polly Ho-Yen and illustrated by Sojung Kim-McCarthy

Recommended age 6-8-years-old



Simple semantic grids give a good indication of the levels of prior knowledge (KWL grids could also be used here).

Start with the topic of your chosen text.

To enhance the oracy element of the work, organise pupils in groups and task them to research and become ‘experts’ in different areas connected to the themes. Then pupils from each group form a home group and share and explain their particular area of expertise and spread their knowledge.

Yes and...

Before

A great quick-fire oracy activity to use in groups.

Choose a keyword that relates to the chosen book. The word is given, and the first pupil must give one fact or statement about.

Then, in turn, each person says *'Yes ... very interesting ... and ...'* they add their own fact – moving round the group to build up speed.

Consider mixing up the types of grouping used to complete this activity, for example tennis pairs, or traverse.

Example

Pupil 1: There are animals that no longer exist.

Pupil 2: Yes x, that's very interesting, and there are some now that are close to being extinct.

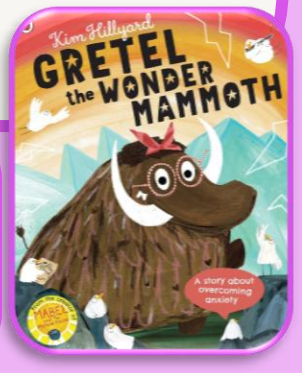
Pupil 3: Yes y and x, that's very interesting, and ...

And so on.

Gretel the Wonder Mammoth

By Kim Hillyard

Recommended age 4-5-years-old



Just a minute

Before

In small groups, with one stopwatch each, one pupil begins to speak articulately on a particular subject linked to the chosen text.

The rest of the group look for any *hesitation, deviation or repetition* and then challenge the speaker, during which the stopwatch is paused.

If the challenge is justified the challenger takes over the speaking.

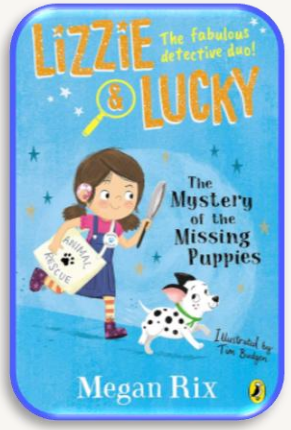
Whoever is speaking at the end of the timed minute is the winner



Lizzie and Lucky: The Mystery of the Missing Puppies

By Megan Rix and illustrated by Tim Budgen

Recommended age 6-8-years-old



What's in a title?

Before



The Squirrels who Squabbled

By Rachel Bright and illustrated by Jim Field

Recommended age 4-7-years-old

Example

Squirrels who are super talkative and very noisy...

Lots of squirrels who all live together...

Two squirrels who argue...

Squirrels who love to draw...

Two families of squirrels who like to play games...

Squirrels who like to dance and sing...

Something else? ...

Providing simple suggestions with space for independent thought, can encourage all pupils to be active participants in the discussion.

Go a step further and require all responses to be framed using the sentence stems provided (I *predict that ... because... etc.)* and you are developing oracy and expecting justification of thoughts and ideas at the same time.

You may want to then show the book cover to pupils – does this change their minds and opinions?

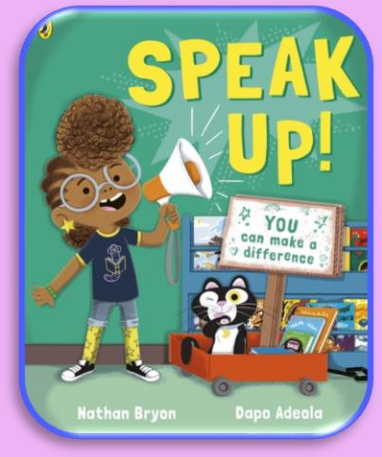
And now we are into inference once more.

I'm thinking of...

Depending on the age and ability of your cohort you could offer either images or words linked to the chosen book or themes for this activity based on the game Articulate.

To take this activity past vocabulary, encourage use of descriptive question stems for pupils to describe their chosen topic without saying the given word.

Before



Example

Speak up!
By Nathan Bryon and illustrated by Dapo Adeola
Recommended age 6-8-years-old



bravery



reading

It looks/feels/sounds/smells like
It reminds me of...
It often...
It usually...

Ranking

Before

Kiki Kallira Breaks a Kingdon: Book 1
By Sangu Mandanna
Recommended age 9-11-years-old



Example

If you were a mythical beast, what features would you like to have to concur a kingdom? Rank them in order of most favourable (1) to least favourable (6).

a. Deafening roar
b. Invisibility
c. Shapeshifting
d. Ultimate strength
e. Controlling the elements
f. Breathing fire

Consider the storyline or topic in the chosen text and identify a list of ideas which pupils could rank.

This activity encourages pupils to put themselves into the context of the story encouraging empathy and further understanding.

The ranking provokes conversation and requires pupils to justify their answers, especially when having to come to a consensus within a pair or group.

Add some sentence stems and again the oracy element is enhanced.

Dictogloss

Before

The collaborative nature of this task is obvious in developing those wider oracy skills too.

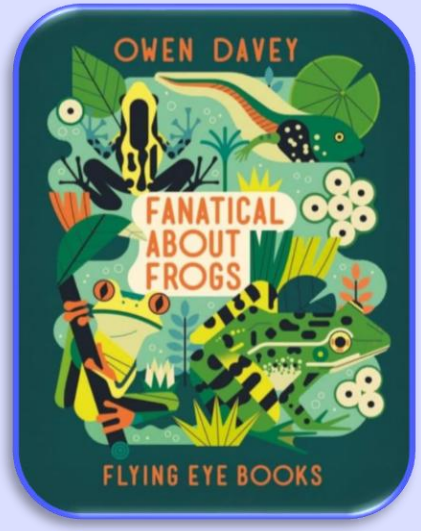
For further support in how to deliver an effective Dictogloss activity explore our resources here: Dictogloss – improving non-fiction writing | National Literacy Trust

Example

Aim: to produce a text as close as possible to the original

Step by step...

1. Listen carefully to the text
2. Listen again, this time writing notes/symbols/text mapping
3. Compare with a neighbour and improve your notes
4. Listen one last time
5. Compare notes with another pair and produce a shared text
6. Write the 'final' text (can also be oral)



Fanatical about Frogs
By Owen Davey
Recommended age 6-11-years-old

Split dictation

Often used as a staple tool for EAL teaching and learning, split dictation in pairs is also great for developing listening skills and embedding content meaning.

Pupils take it in turns to read aloud and complete each other's sentences. Following several repetitions (obviously without seeing each other's scripts) can each pupil recall the information needed to complete each sentence so it makes sense? This final stage can be oral or written as required.

Developing and activating this prior knowledge is vital for comprehension and opportunities for deepening those oracy skills at the same time abound.

Before

The Squirrels who Squabbled

By Rachel Bright and illustrated by Jim Field

Recommended age 4-7-years-old



Example

For most animals finding enough food in winter can be difficult when _____.

2. _____by hibernating.
3. Hibernation is a deep sleep that helps _____ _____ .
4. _____ _____slow down so that it does not use much energy.
5. Hibernating animals get ready for their winter sleep by _____.
6. Some of the hibernating animals include fish, frogs and turtles, _____.

1. ----------food like insects or green plants are scarce .
2. Some animals solve this problem_____.
3. _____animals to save energy and survive the winter.
4. During hibernation the animal's body temperature drops, and its heartbeat and its breathing_____.
5. _____ eating extra food and storing it as body fat.
6. _____, which have no way to keep warm during winter.

Where do you stand

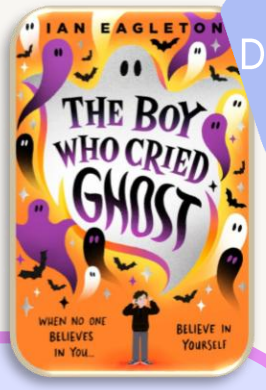
A range of popular drama strategies can of course be used for deepening comprehension, but some simple structures and techniques can make the difference when it comes to developing those oracy skills at the same time.

During

The Boy Who Cried Ghost

By Ian Eagleton

Recommended age 9-13-years-old



Example

There is no such thing as ghosts

Version 1 - Identify a conflict or problem presented within the story. Create a continuum in the classroom from one side to the other, agreeing or disagreeing with the problem, character, or perspective given by the text. Ask pupils to place themselves on the continuum to demonstrate their viewpoint. Use sentence stems to support pupils in justifying their reasons for choosing that position. How many will change position when they hear someone else's justification, or even as they are explaining their own?

Version 2 - This activity works best when the text provides a clear conflict between two or more characters. Identify the moment of conflict or jeopardy in the text and reflect on that moment with the class. Collect pupils in groups (group numbers should reflect the characters in the text, plus an additional judge). Have the characters argue their case as to why they might be right in this conflict. Then allow the judge to come to a decision based on clear reasoning as to who is right at this stage of the story. Provide sentence stems for all roles and encourage the judge to pull from the characters' arguments, to support their opinion. They too should use the correct sentence stems to help frame their decision and draw on the students' arguments to support their opinion.

Double bubble

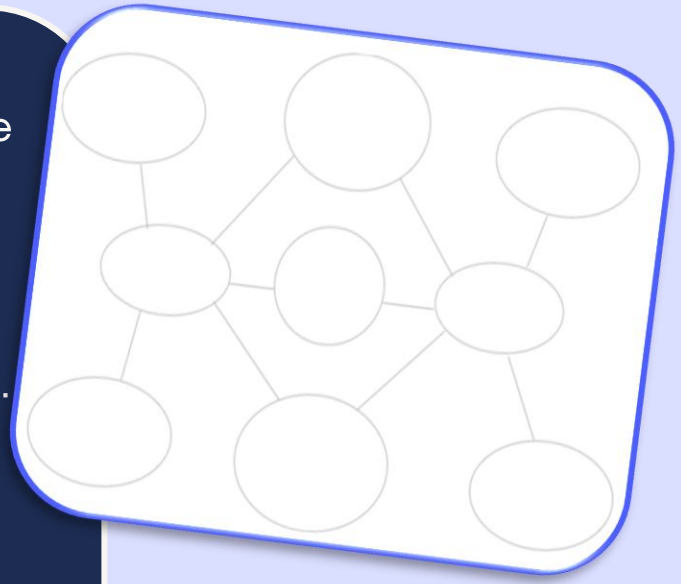
During

Graphic organisers are perfect for paired work and encourage collaborative discussion. A double bubble structure is perfect to aid discussion where there is the opportunity to compare two main characters with similar characteristics, by offering differing opinions. Using sentence stems once again, this time with regard to the language of comparison, is ideal. Then as the pairs feedback to the whole class, the opportunity for challenge and probing and a more dialogic discussion is perfect.

Example

A character might be adventurous as the text explains, but is there any evidence to suggest that the other character is NOT adventurous? These opportunities deepen both comprehension and the cognitive skills of oracy. Use of key vocabulary from the text might be used to support younger pupils.

- They are similar because...
- I think they are different, as on the one hand... but... on the other....
- Similarly...
- In contrast...
- They share similar traits, for example...
- They differ in some ways, for example...
- They are alike because they both...
- Another characteristic they have in common is...
- In some ways they are alike, for instance...



Readers' theatre

During

Share a section of the text with the class and bring the vocabulary alive with readers' theatre.

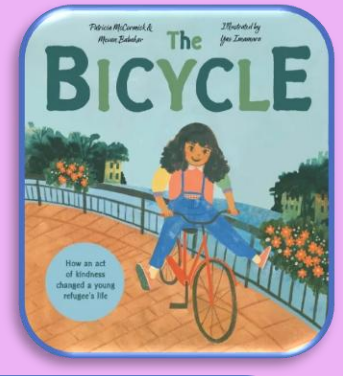
Split up the text, with pupils taking parts and producing a choral performance with actions. This presents a perfect opportunity for explicit development of the physical aspects of oracy such as tone, pace, facial expression, etc

Example

The Bicycle

By Patricia McCormick and Mevan Babakar and illustrated by Yas Imamura

Recommended age 4-7-years-old



But the people wouldn't let them stay there either. So, her family took a train through forest and fields, across rivers and mountains and plains. For three days, Mevan hid in a train carriage, making herself almost invisible.

The Bicycle

Vocabulary development

During

Vocabulary, of course, sits at the heart of comprehension and with such a wide variety of excellent language on offer in high-quality texts, selection of tier two words for direct instruction will be key.

Content grouping
Collect interesting or new vocabulary from the text as you read it through. Once collected, can pupils in pairs or small groups, match and group words together? *Which go together?*

Idioms matching
Idioms are often used within oral and written storytelling to provide imagery. Another great group activity would be to try a matching game, where collaboration and the pooling of knowledge might help in working out what those tricky idioms really mean.

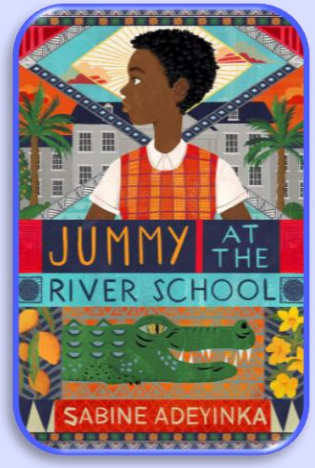
Talking points

Rather than asking questions about the storyline or themes within your chosen text, pose questions to open a discussion, allowing for multiple points of view to be explored.

Jummy at the River School

By Sabine Adeyinka

Recommended age 8-12-years-old



Example

Talking points

Jummy is brave

School is fun

Boarding schools are an exciting way to learn

All children should have access to the same education

A great debate

Take the wider themes of a text and try and translate them to an alternative scenario that sits in their own reality, for example within school communities, to deepen thinking skills.



After the Fall

By Dan Santat

Recommended age 6-8-years-old

Example

A classmate is playing a game of football at break time. They love football and not only play at school, but at home, and they go to football training too. On this occasion, the pupil is about to take a goal to win the match, and they slip, miss the goal and graze their hands and knees. The rest of the team laugh at them for being so clumsy, and they run off to the toilets.

It's been a few weeks, and you realise this pupil no longer plays football at break time, and you hear someone complaining that their football team is now down a player.

You're not best friends with this person but you can see how this moment has stopped them from doing the thing they love.

Is it your place to help them? Should you forget about it? Would you speak to their friends? Do you try and talk to them?

Research and Curriculum links

More information about the research and curriculum links that have gone into shaping this resource can be found in the training guide alongside this document.

If you have any further questions about how this resource came about or would like to express an interest in how you could work collaboratively with the **National Literacy Trust** in future resources like these, please contact membership@literacytrust.org.uk.