



The assessments included nine tasks that involved students in making oral presentations for various purposes: telling stories, developing and presenting puppet plays, talking on allocated topics and planning to interview a visitor.

Seven of the tasks were identical for year 4 and year 8 students. The other two tasks were in effect a pair of tasks, with very similar instructions, the same marking procedures and criteria, but different stimulus materials for year 4 and year 8 students.

Four tasks are trend tasks (fully described with data for both 1996 and 2000), two are released tasks (fully described with data for 2000 only), and three are link tasks (to be used again in 2004, so only partially described here).

The tasks are presented in that order.

The performances of year 4 and year 8 students in 2000 were compared on 40 components of the 7 tasks attempted by both year levels. On average, 15 percent more year 8 than year 4 students succeeded on these components. The largest differences (averaging 21 percent) occurred on *Special Visitor*, which required developing sets of questions for an overseas visitor to a school class. The smallest differences (averaging 8 percent) occurred on *Puppet Play*, which involved the planning and preparation of a play using hand puppets.

Changes in performance between 1996 and 2000 could be examined on the four trend tasks. Averaged across 13 components of three tasks, 2 percent more year 4 students succeeded in 2000 than in 1996, but 6 percent fewer year 8 students succeeded in 2000 than in 1996. This decrease was due mainly to 16 percent fewer year 8 students in 2000 succeeding on the components of *Puppet Play*. It is appropriate to conclude that between 1996 and 2000 the performance of year 4 students did not change, but there was a small decline in the performance of year 8 students.



Trend task

The Sandwich

Approach: One to one

Level: Year 4 and year 8

Focus: Retelling a story from a picture book without words.

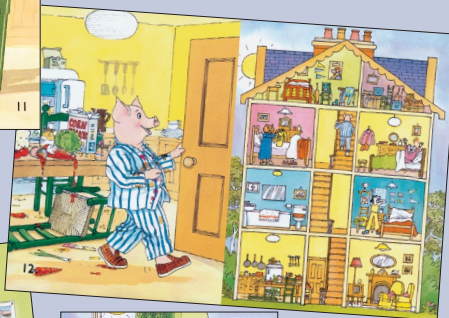
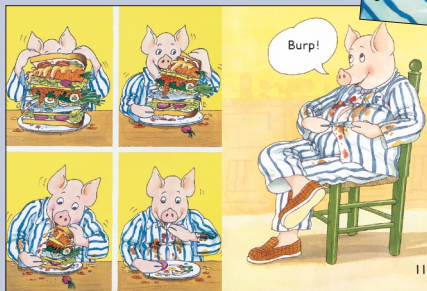
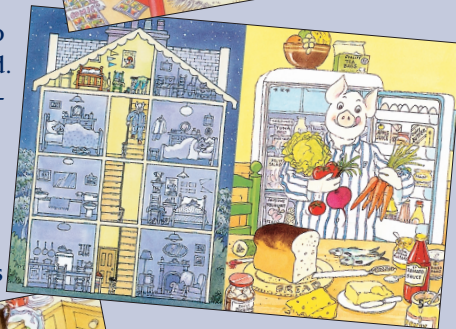
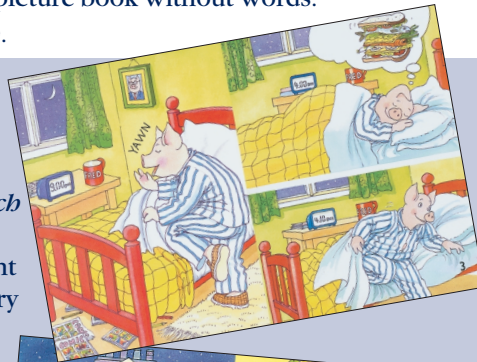
Resources: Book *The Sandwich*.

Question/instructions:

In this activity I would like you to tell a story.

This book called *The Sandwich* tells a story in pictures but it doesn't have any words. I want you to make up your own story by looking at the pictures. Pretend that you are going to tell the story to a young child. You need to make it as interesting as possible.

Here is the book. Have a quick look through it first, then you can start to tell me the story in a way that makes it fun to listen to.



Covering the main thread of the story

strong

% responses	
2000 ('96)	2000('96)
year 4	year 8
60 (62)	73 (80)

moderate

34 (36)	24 (19)
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weak

6 (2)	3 (1)
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Embellishing the story

detailed description

strong

27 (29)	39 (41)
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moderate

53 (45)	50 (53)
---------	---------

weak

20 (26)	11 (6)
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Clear oral expression of ideas

strong

54 (52)	65 (69)
---------	---------

moderate

34 (40)	30 (28)
---------	---------

weak

8 (8)	5 (3)
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Making presentation interesting

strong

26 (23)	35 (39)
---------	---------

moderate

54 (46)	52 (49)
---------	---------

weak

20 (31)	13 (12)
---------	---------

Overall effectiveness in presenting story

very high

8 (2)	15 (19)
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quite high

33 (37)	39 (37)
---------	---------

moderate

47 (48)	40 (36)
---------	---------

low

12 (13)	6 (8)
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Total score: 10-11

18 (17)	29 (32)
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8-9

22 (20)	22 (23)
---------	---------

6-7

25 (25)	27 (28)
---------	---------

4-5

18 (18)	13 (11)
---------	---------

2-3

10 (17)	5 (4)
---------	-------

0-1

7 (3)	4 (2)
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Commentary:

More than half of the students at both levels covered the main thread of the story well, with clear oral expression. Considerably fewer made the story detailed and interesting. On each attribute and overall, about 10 percent more year 8 than year 4 students scored highly. Differences between 1996 and 2000 performances were quite small.

Puppet Play

Trend task

Approach: Team

Level: Year 4 and year 8

Focus: Planning and presenting plays using hand puppets and thematic ideas.

Resources: 2 prompt sheets, 8 hand puppets.

Questions/instructions:

In this activity you are going to work in pairs to put on some puppet plays. Each pair will have 4 puppets, 2 puppets each. You should try to use different voices so that your 2 puppets will sound different from each other, and have their own personalities. Try to use words to tell what is happening rather than overdoing the movements with your puppets.

You will have up to 10 minutes to discuss what you are going to do, and to practise your play. Then you will put on your play. Your play should take about 2 or 3 minutes.

Here are the ideas for the plays.

Read each pair's prompt card, then give them the cards to refer to during their practice.

PUPPET PLAY 1

Animals and the zoo keeper

The animals are having a meeting with the zoo keeper. They are telling him what it's like living in the zoo and the things that go on. The zoo keeper is a nice man. He

wants to be helpful, so he asks questions and talks to the animals about what they are saying.

REMEMBER

Practice your play so that it is about 2 or 3 minutes long. Use your imagination Use interesting voices and ideas. Try to make the characters sound real. Don't over do the actions with the puppets.

PUPPET PLAY 2

Aliens on Earth

Two aliens have arrived on Earth. They have to go to school, but they have never been to a school before. They meet up with a couple of kids. The kids ask them all about what it is like living on another planet. The aliens ask the kids about what it will be like at school.

REMEMBER

Practice your play so that it is about 2 or 3 minutes long. Use your imagination Use interesting voices and ideas. Try to make the characters sound real. Don't over do the actions with the puppets.



Remember, you've got about 10 minutes to practise then we'll watch your play.

A packaging carton may be placed on top of a desk as a place for the puppeteers to operate from.

Drama and characterisation through spoken word:

	% responses	
	2000 ('96)	2000 ('96)
	year 4	year 8
strong	19 (15)	27 (35)
moderate	54 (55)	51 (51)
weak	27 (30)	22 (14)

Timing, continuity and interaction with partner:

strong	21 (25)	32 (49)
moderate	58 (51)	52 (46)
weak	21 (24)	16 (5)

Speech clarity:

(listener can hear and understand the words)

strong	42 (48)	45 (69)
moderate	45 (42)	45 (29)
weak	13 (10)	10 (2)

Overall effectiveness in communicating story:

very high	5 (5)	8 (16)
quite high	23 (28)	31 (39)
moderate	47 (44)	43 (36)
poor	25 (23)	18 (9)

Total score: 8-9 13 (13) 19 (34)

6-7 16 (19) 21 (24)

4-5 37 (37) 35 (27)

2-3 19 (16) 11 (11)

0-1 15 (15) 14 (4)



Commentary:

Students at both year levels enjoyed this task but found it challenging to plan and practise a puppet play in a period of about 10 minutes. About 10 percent more year 8 than year 4 students met this challenge well. Year 4 students performed almost identically in 1996 and 2000, but year 8 students performed distinctly less well in 2000 than in 1996.

Trend task

Talk Time

Approach: Team

Focus: Giving an interesting talk on a topic.

Resources: Set of topic cards, egg timer.

Level: Year 4

Questions/instructions:

This activity is called Talk Time. I will give each of you 3 cards with talk titles written on them. Choose the one you would like to talk about to the others. When it's your turn to give a talk, try to give the most interesting talk you can think of. Try to keep the others in the team really interested in what you are saying to them.

I would like each person to talk for as long as you can, but no more than 3 minutes. We have an egg timer here to let us see when 3 minutes are up.

Here are your cards. Look at them and choose one card to talk about.

Shuffle the cards. Give each student cards. Tell them the order they will speak, then ask the first student to start. Get them to read the words on the card out loud before they begin talking.



		% responses
		2000 ('96)
		year 4
Relevance of content to topic	strong	44 (32)
	moderate	40 (48)
	weak	16 (20)
Coherence of presentation <i>does it hang together?</i>	strong	29 (17)
	moderate	46 (56)
	weak	25 (27)
Degree of interest stimulated	strong	23 (13)
	moderate	46 (56)
	weak	31 (31)
Speech clarity	strong	49 (50)
	moderate	38 (40)
	weak	13 (10)
Total score:	7-8	28 (17)
	5-6	28 (28)
	3-4	21 (32)
	0-2	23 (23)

Commentary:

About half of the year 4 students were judged to speak clearly and select relevant material, but only about a quarter of the students managed coherent and/or interesting talks. About 10 percent more students succeeded well in 2000 than in 1996. The year 8 task, *Talk Topics* (overleaf) used the same procedures but different topics.

Talk Topics

Trend task

Approach: Team

Level: Year 8

Focus: Giving an interesting talk on a topic.

Resources: Set of 12 topic cards, egg timer.

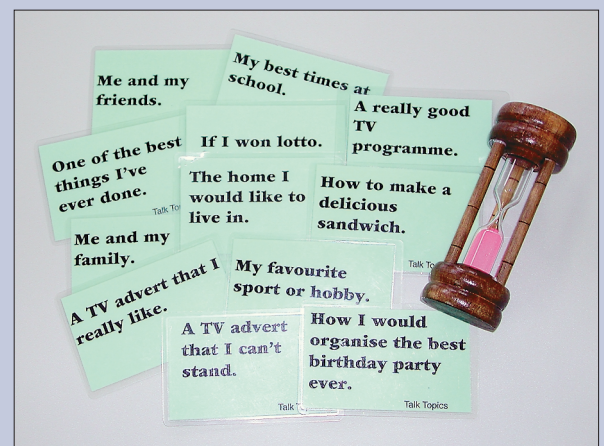
Questions/instructions:

This activity is called Talk Topics. I will give each of you 3 cards with talk topics written on them. Think about the one you would like to talk about, then when it's your turn, try to give the most interesting talk you can think of. Try to keep the others in the team really interested in what you are saying to them.

I would like each person to talk for about 3 minutes. We have an egg timer here to let us see when 3 minutes are up.

Here are the cards, look at the cards and choose one topic to talk about.

Shuffle the cards. Give each student 3 cards. Tell them the order they will speak, then ask the first student to start.



		% responses	
		2000 ('96)	
		year 8	
Relevance of content to topic	strong	72 (73)	
	moderate	20 (23)	
	weak	8 (4)	
Coherence of presentation <i>does it hang together?</i>	strong	36 (29)	
	moderate	46 (54)	
	weak	18 (17)	
Degree of interest stimulated	strong	26 (24)	
	moderate	48 (45)	
	weak	26 (31)	
Speech clarity	strong	56 (51)	
	moderate	37 (42)	
	weak	7 (7)	
Total score: 7-8		31 (26)	
		5-6	39 (41)
		3-4	19 (24)
		0-2	11 (9)

Commentary:

Most of the year 8 students selected relevant material for their talk, but only about half of them were judged to speak clearly, a third of them to present a coherent talk, and a quarter of them to stimulate interest in the topic. Slightly more students succeeded well in 2000 than in 1996. The year 4 task *Talk Time* (previous page) used the same procedures but different topics.

Special Visitor

Approach: Team

Level: Year 4 and year 8

Focus: Developing appropriate questions for a purpose.

Resources: 2 copies of photograph, 2 recording sheets, highlighter pen.

Questions/instructions:

Imagine your class is learning about people in different countries. Also imagine that you are going to have a visit from a very special person who is shown in the photograph. To get ready for the visit, you need to think up some good questions to ask.

I want you to think up two different kinds of questions: questions that can have very short answers, and questions that could give longer and more detailed answers. The **“short answer”** questions will give you some important pieces of information or facts about the visitor. The **“longer answer”** questions will give the visitor a chance to tell you quite a lot.

Show recording sheet.

I want you to start off by working in pairs. On one side of your paper write down questions that could have short answers. On the other side, write down questions that

could have longer answers. See how many questions you can think of. If you want help with writing words, just let me know. You have about 5 minutes to make up your questions.

Assign students to pairs A1, A2, and A3, A4. Give each pair an answer sheet and photograph. Allow 5 minutes.

Now it's time for all of you to work together. I want you to show and read your lists of questions to each other. After that, have a discussion to decide on 5 of the best short-answer questions, and 5 of the best long-answer questions. You can use a highlighter pen to mark the questions after you have made your decision. Take care to choose the short answer questions because they will give you some important pieces of information or facts about the visitor. Choose longer answer questions because they will give the visitor a chance to tell you quite a lot. When you've finished doing this, let me know.



Allow time for students to make their decisions.

Now let's imagine I'm the special visitor, so you can practise asking your questions. Begin by asking your five short answer questions.

Encourage students to give their short answer questions.

Requested important facts or pieces of information

	% responses	
	y4	y8
question 1	87	89
question 2	77	87
question 3	80	82
question 4	72	77
question 5	67	74

Now ask me your five longer answer questions.

Encourage students to give their longer answer questions.

Would give visitor an opportunity to tell a lot.

question 6	46	75
question 7	38	62
question 8	38	63
question 9	33	61
question 10	17	63

Appropriateness of total set of questions for purpose of learning about special visitor

appropriateness high	11	67
moderate	51	30
slight	36	3
inappropriate	2	0

Commentary:

About 30 percent more year 8 than year 4 teams were able to generate questions in the requested long answer format. The advantage increased to 50 percent when the appropriateness of the 10 selected questions for their purpose was judged.

Wishing Ring

Approach: Team

Level: Year 4 and year 8

Focus: Making up and telling the ending of an incomplete story.

Resources: Audio recording on laptop computer.

Questions/instructions:

Click the Wishing Ring button.

You are going to hear the start of a story called *The Wishing Ring*. You'll hear most of the story — but not its ending.

After you have heard the start of the story, you can make up your own ending for the story and tell it to me. If you already know this story try to think of your own ending — not the one you already know.

Click the Play button to start the video.

The Wishing Ring

- a folk tale -

Once upon a time there was a poor farmer whose life was very hard. He was resting at his work one day when an old witch walked past. She stopped and asked, "Why do you work so hard when it brings you so little reward? I'll tell you what to do. Walk straight ahead until you get to a great pine tree that is taller than all the trees in the forest. Chop it down and your luck will be made."

The farmer took his axe and started out. After two days he found the pine tree. He chopped its mighty trunk, and when the tree finally came down, there fell from its highest tip a great bird's nest with two eggs in it.

The eggs rolled on to the ground and broke. Out of one came an eagle, out of the other fell a gold ring. Then the eagle grew and grew until he was half as big as the farmer himself. The eagle tried his wings and as he flew up he called out, "You have rescued me. Take the ring that fell from the egg. It is a wishing ring! Put it on your finger as you speak your wish out loud, and the wish will surely come true. But remember — there is only one wish with the ring. When it has come true it will have lost its power and will be like any other ring. So think hard before you make your wish so that you don't regret it later." Then the eagle flew away.

The story teller stopped before the story finished. I want you to take over and be the story teller. Keep on telling the story, and try to give it a good ending. Remember, you're a story teller.

Encourage the student to take the role of a story teller.

		% responses	
		y4	y8
Creativity/originality	very	18	34
	moderate	41	47
	little or no	41	19
Continuity <i>follows narrative thread appropriately</i>			
	very well linked	20	37
	partially fits, some discontinuity	62	59
	doesn't follow story at all	18	4
Achieved closure <i>brought story to clear conclusion</i>			
	very cohesive, complete ending	12	24
	quite cohesive, most elements pulled together	27	42
	partial, abrupt or confusing ending	36	29
	story clearly not completed	25	5
Oral presentation			
	very expressive and lively	8	15
	moderately expressive	43	59
	little expressiveness	49	26
Language	used rich descriptive language	17	30
Total score:			
8-10		11	25
5-7		25	40
3-4		28	22
0-2		36	13

Commentary:

About 25 percent more year 8 than year 4 students scored well on this task overall. It was quite a challenging task, with about half of the year 4 students scoring the lowest rating on two or more of the five criteria. These results can be compared with a parallel task – p.20, Writing Assessment Results 1998, Report 12.

Link tasks 10-12

LINK TASK 10

Approach: One to one
Level: Year 4 and year 8
Focus: Social task
Resources: None

	% responses	
	y4	y8
Total score: 17-20	1	2
13-16	5	14
9-12	10	24
5-8	38	36
0-4	46	24

Commentary:

About 20 percent more year 8 than year 4 students scored 9 or more on this task.

LINK TASK 11

Approach: Team
Level: Year 4 and year 8
Focus: Telling a story
Resources: 7 pictures

	% responses	
	y4	y8
Total score: 7-9	48	61
4-6	38	32
2-3	11	6
0-1	3	1

Commentary:

About 10 percent more year 8 than year 4 students scored 7 or more on this task.

LINK TASK 12

Approach: Team
Level: Year 4 and year 8
Focus: Expressing opinions
Resources: 5 cards

	% responses	
	y4	y8
Total score: 6-7	4	11
4-5	5	13
2-3	60	61
0-1	31	15

Commentary:

About 15 percent more year 8 than year 4 students scored 4 or more on this task.