

## Section 9

### 9.1 Understanding which day comes next



#### Why is this important?

Knowing the days of the week and the events that occur on particular days helps children learn routines. This is how children learn to understand and describe time beyond what happens every day. It also enables them to accept change when something different happens (e.g. no swimming this Wednesday).



#### What to do

- Make a chart together. Put the days of the week across the top. It may be helpful to do Monday–Friday in a different colour from Saturday–Sunday.
- Encourage the child to draw a picture of something he/she does each day (e.g. swimming, PE, assembly, music).
  - Talk about the activities in relation to the days of the week, e.g.
    - ★ Adult: ‘On Monday you go swimming, and the day after Monday is ...?’
    - ★ Pause to see if the child can fill in the missing day. Prompt him/her by using his/her pictures (e.g. ‘You do PE on this day’).
      - ★ Child: ‘Tuesday’ and adult repeats: ‘So the day after Monday is ...?’

## 9.2 Understanding passive sentences



### Why is this important?

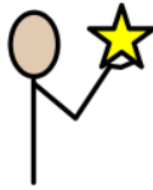
Understanding more complex sentences enables children to process more complex instructions and prepares them for using sophisticated structures which convey subtle differences in meaning. The passive voice is often quite challenging in terms of children's grammatical development because they cannot rely on word order.



### What to do

- Gather together some toys and everyday objects, e.g.
  - ★ Two favourite dolls such as Batman, Barbie, Bob the Builder.
    - ★ Cup, play food, sponge, brush, car, ball.
- Ask the child to listen to the instruction and then do the action, e.g.
  - ★ 'Batman is fed a banana by Spiderman.'
  - ★ 'The car is washed by Bob the Builder.'
  - ★ 'Barbie's hair is brushed by Dora.'

### 9.3 Identifying an increasing range of emotions and feelings in ourselves and others



#### Why is this important?

Facial expressions convey numerous and complex emotional states and we begin to infer another person's feelings by watching how they react/feel (from happiness, sadness, anxiety, etc.). They are an important part of emotional intelligence and link closely to being able to make inferences.



#### What to do

- In pairs or a small group, act out scenarios by allocating roles: a scene in a shop perhaps – a long queue, an annoyed customer, etc.
- Encourage children to work out feelings from gestures, tone of voice, body language and facial expression.
- Use illustrated stories or composite pictures: look at the scene and then work out the feelings of the characters (e.g. a messy bedroom discovered by Mum! 'Look at her face, how does she feel?').

## 9.4 Beginning to understand idioms



### Why is this important?

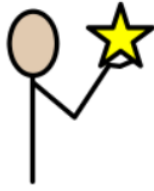
An idiom is a phrase where the words, when put together, have a meaning which is different from that of the words when used individually (e.g. 'Pull your socks up' has nothing to do with the action of pulling or socks). This makes idioms tricky to understand and learn, but there are lots of them in the English language.



### What to do

- Compile a list of idioms/phrases/sayings that are used on a regular basis, e.g.
  - ★ 'On the other hand.'
  - ★ 'Don't cry over spilt milk.'
  - ★ 'Raining cats and dogs.'
  - ★ 'Pulling your leg.'
  - ★ 'A piece of cake.'
  - ★ 'Feeling under the weather.'
- Choose one idiom at a time and write down two or three alternatives to the meaning (e.g. for 'Pull your socks up'):
  - ★ Make sure your socks are always tidy.
  - ★ Try harder.
  - ★ Put your socks away tidily.
- Ask the child to say what he/she thinks the idiom means. Talk through the options. Put the idiom in a scenario. For example, a girl is doing her numbers in school. The teacher knows she is good at number work and says 'Come on Emily, pull your socks up and then you can go out to play'.
- Work through various idioms and try to use examples in everyday conversation which illustrate how idioms are used and what they mean. If you hear someone use an idiom, comment on it and explain the meaning.

## 9.5 Predicting what might happen next



### Why is this important?

Children need to learn to predict in order to problem-solve and decide what, in all probability, is going to happen next. This involves analysing and synthesising information.



### What to do

- Read a story together. This might be a fairy story, a book from the library, school reading book or story in a child's magazine.
  - Read a few pages to introduce the characters.
- At key places, stop and before you turn the page, ask: 'What do you think might happen next?'
  - The child may need more guidance and more direct questions (e.g. when reading 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', you could ask 'Whose house do you think she will find?' After she's eaten the porridge, ask 'What's Goldilocks going to do now?' and when the bears come home, ask 'What do you think the bears are going to find?').
- In the 'Oxford Reading Tree\*' stories, there is often something 'funny' that happens on the last page. Stop before this page to ask the child what he/she thinks might happen at the end.

## 9.6 Understanding periods of time



### Why is this important?

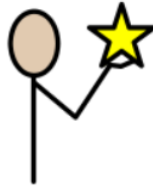
Understanding milestones of time (e.g. days of the week, months of the year, seasons) provides structure and routine and helps children analyse what is a complex concept.



### What to do

- Start with the days of the week: there are rhymes and songs to help remember the days.
  - Make a chart putting the days at the top.
- Talk about what happens on the different days. Use the school-day and children's home-life experiences to pinpoint key events (e.g. there may be PE on a Monday, music on a Thursday, etc. At home there may be swimming on a Tuesday and a visit to Grandma on Sunday).
  - Talk about Monday–Friday being 'school' days and Saturday–Sunday as 'home' days.
- Use an arrow to point to what day it is and talk about key things that happened yesterday and events that are going to happen tomorrow.
  - Use photographs of the child engaging in activities to help him/her remember.

## 9.7 Remembering more and more information



### Why is this important?

Children need to be able to remember increasingly longer and more complicated information. This develops their memory skills which is important for language.



### What to do

- Shopping games (e.g. 'I went to the shops and bought ...') and variations of this, such as packing for a holiday, are ideal opportunities for remembering increasing amounts of information!
  - Assemble a small group of children.
  - You start the game by saying 'I went to the shop and bought a banana'.
- The next child repeats what you said and then adds another item (e.g. 'I went to the shop and bought a banana and some biscuits').
- Then the next child repeats the sentence and adds another item – and so on until you think it's time to stop!

## 9.8 Using category names and explaining the differences between things in the same category/finding the odd one out



### Why is this important?

As language skills develop, children learn to be able to identify and explain increasingly more subtle differences between things.

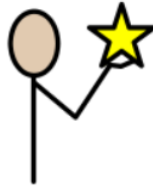


### What to do

- Gather together some pictures/objects from a variety of categories (e.g. clothes, food, toys, furniture, transport, animals).
  - Choose three pictures/objects from the same category (e.g. three animals). Two of the animals must have something in common and one must be different (e.g. horse, cow, fish).
  - Put out these three pictures. Ask which group all the pictures belong to. If this is difficult, offer a choice 'Are these clothes or animals?'
    - Ask which two pictures go together best (e.g. horse and cow).
  - Ask why: there could be several reasons (e.g. four legs, farm animals, live in fields).
    - Ask what's different about the other animal (e.g. fish).



## 9.9 Making inferences using idioms



### Why is this important?

Inferencing is a key strand in the development of language understanding. Idioms are a more advanced form of non-literal abstract language processing. Linking them together increases the complexity of linguistic understanding required. However, without understanding this level of language complexity, children find it difficult to get beyond the literal interpretation.



### What to do

- On an individual basis or in pairs, act out a little story from pictures (e.g. missing the bus, dropping the eggs out of the shopping basket – how do people feel?).
- Use a picture which includes inference and idiom (e.g. 'Farida is in bed – how does she feel?', 'Farida has a frog in her throat. Is it true that Farida has a frog in her throat?').
  - If the child says 'yes' discuss what the idiom actually means.
  - If the child says 'no', ask 'So why is Farida saying this?'

## 9.10 Talking about things that are going to happen (the future tense)



### Why is this important?

Children need to be able to explain routines and events that they know will happen, either soon or over a longer timescale. They also need to be able to predict circumstances and events that might happen. For any or all of these, the future tense is important.



### What to do

- Gather together some food items and play a shopping game together.
- Give the child a list of items (in picture format) that he/she needs to buy from the shop.  
Ask:
  - ★ 'What are you going to buy from the shop?'
  - Expect the child to use the lead in phrase ...
    - ★ 'I'm going to buy ...'
- Encourage the child to remember the items he/she needs and ask the shopkeeper (adult) for it.
  - Repeat the sequence until the child has collected all the items on the 'list'.