

Talking groups poster

Further information about the different groupings

Think, pair, share (partners)

Pausing regularly in a lesson to engage students in ‘think, pair, share’ benefits both students and the teacher. Students shift from passive to active learning and the teacher is able to monitor how the learning is progressing and make adjustments accordingly.

Think — allow students five seconds to think of what they will say.

Pair — students talk for a short time with a partner. The teacher can end the talking time with a simple countdown from five.

Share — when appropriate, a range of students share back their responses. This is not necessary every time students talk to a partner.

Listening triads

Students work in groups of three, taking on three roles. The role cards in *The Oral Language Book* could be used — PM29 and 30.

Examples of roles for triads:

- speaker, questioner, recorder
- speaker, listener, questioner.

The speaker talks on a particular topic. After the speaker has finished, the other two students follow their roles, for example: The ‘questioner’ asks questions in order to find out more and the ‘recorder’ takes notes in preparation for feeding back to the speaker, another group or the whole class. The roles could then be rotated around the group.

Think, pair, square

Instead of sharing back as a class, partners turn and face another pair and then share as a four. The teacher could structure this discussion by asking students to complete a particular task. For example:

- Record two ideas shared by the other pair.
- Listen to the ideas from the other pair and then summarise/add a new idea/ask a question.

Circle

A circle is a common grouping used in most classrooms. It allows all students to see each other and to be included. The teacher can also be at the same level as the students. The idea of a group ‘round’ (everyone in a circle having a turn to say something on a specific topic) is a useful activity in a circle. Starting the day or a lesson with a ‘round’ develops oral language skills and promotes a positive class culture. Students are able to talk and listen to each other’s ideas and points of view. It is also good practice for speaking in full sentences.

Doughnut circle

Students sit or stand in two circles. The outside circle faces inwards and the inside circle faces outward, so that everyone is facing a partner. The teacher sets a talking task. For example, share ideas on a topic, introduce themselves, share a fact or opinion, or share one success from a lesson.

There are ideas for talk topics in *The Oral Language Book* (PM36, PM37, PM55).

Students have a turn each to speak. The teacher could call ‘Switch’ (reference — page 39, *The Oral Language Book*) when it is time to change partners. After they have both spoken, the inside circle moves one partner to the left (this could differ, for example five spaces to the left or three spaces to the right). A good listening activity is to ask students to share what their previous partner said with their new partner. Students could also take notes on what partners have shared.

Line up

This is similar to a doughnut circle except students are in two lines, facing their partner. Select one line to move up one partner, with the person at the top of the line moving to the bottom of the line.

Jigsaw grouping

This grouping organisation is effective when planning an in-depth collaborative task. The students are initially organised into ‘home’ groups of equal numbers. Each student in the group is given a number: 1, 2, 3 or 4. Students with the same number then move to form a group with other students who have the same number. This new ‘expert’ group is allocated the same topic.

For example:

- 1 = information about the habitat of a panda
- 2 = information about the diet of a panda
- 3 = general information about the panda
- 4 = conservation information about pandas.

The students work together to learn about their expert topic. The teacher may give the groups a section of text to read, a video clip to watch or some research links. The students could take notes or record information on a graphic organiser. After the expert group has prepared their information, the members return to their home group and each team member shares his or her ‘expert’ information. Four square notes (PM19 — *The Oral Language Book*) could be used to record the information learned from each expert in the group.

Horse shoe

A horse shoe is similar to a circle but it allows the class to all view the teaching area as well as each other.