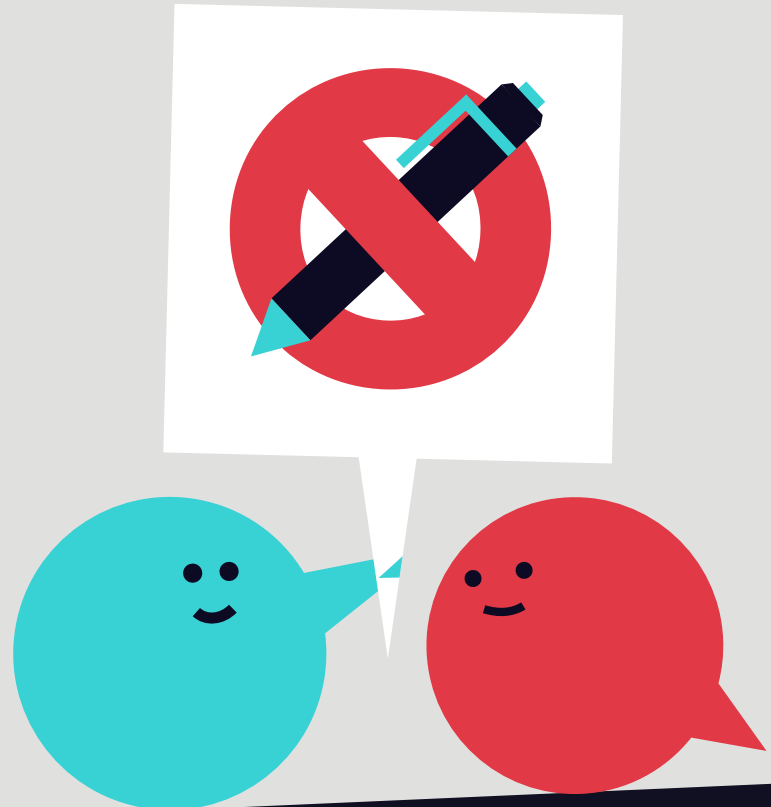


# Lesson plans

## Early years



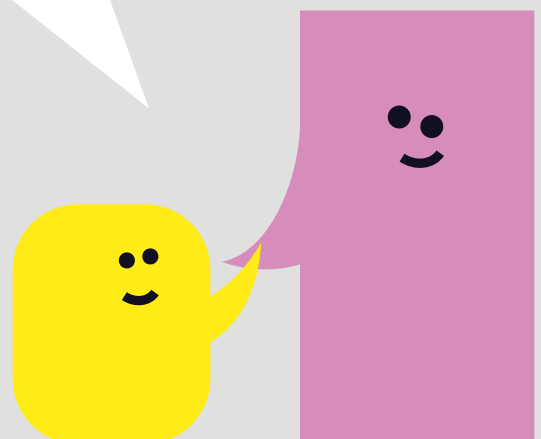
# These No Pens Day lesson plans have been created by early years teachers and speech and language therapists.

They can be used as they are, or adapted and built upon to suit your needs and the children you work with. Each lesson plan has ideas for adaptive teaching to support different levels of development.

These lesson plans support different aspects of speech, language and communication skills, and aim to follow good practice principles:

- Identifying explicit learning objectives, based on the early years foundation stage (EYFS).
- Encouraging the use of visual supports to support children's understanding and learning.
- Including ideas for discussion points and links to home learning to consolidate learning.

Visit the [Speech and Language UK website](https://www.speechandlanguageuk.com) for more information about supporting children's speech, language and communication skills.



Theme: We hear everyone

## Activity title: A listening walk

### Learning objective/aim:

- To focus on the sounds in the environment.

### Success criteria:

- I know what good listening means.
- I can describe the sounds I hear.

### Resources:

- Identified spaces for listening (outdoor area, hall, indoor area)
- A talking tin or tablet for recording sounds (optional)

### Instructions:

1. Remind the children of the skills involved in good listening (be quiet, ears and eyes ready) and ask for their ideas about why good listening is important.
2. Ask the children to listen very carefully to the sounds around them and then talk about the different sounds they can hear. Encourage the use of varied vocabulary to describe what they hear. Copy the sounds yourself and encourage children to do the same.
3. Walk to different environments around your setting and discuss what you can hear.

### Scaffolding:

- Use a cupped ear (or a similar picture) to signal when it's time to listen.
- Bring a child to a quieter space first to help focus on the individual sounds/noises.
- Make a "listening headband" (large ears stuck to a paper strip) for children to wear to maintain focus and keep it fun.

### Extension:

- Take a talking tin, tablet or other device to record the sounds and then play them back later.
- Take a listening walk around the local area.

### Think about:

#### Draw out from discussions:

- The importance of using listening skills to listen carefully.
- Other times we might need to listen carefully (e.g. when others are talking).
- Why we might need to listen a bit more carefully to others.

#### You may want to ask:

- What was easy/hard about listening to the sounds?
- How would we feel if our voice wasn't heard (e.g. our 'sounds')?

### Links to home learning:

- Ask families to listen for sounds on the way home.
- Ask families to complete a listening walk in their home or on their way home or in the park.
- Encourage families to take listening walks together, encourage them to talk to their child about the sounds that they hear around them.



Theme: We all have a voice

## Activity title: Body percussion orchestra

### Learning objective/aim:

To create a piece of music using body percussion.

### Success criteria:

- I can use pictures to help me follow instructions.
- I can use body percussion to make a piece of music.

### Resources:

- A picture of a hand, a foot and a mouth on individual cards.
- A stop sign or picture (optional as a gesture can be used instead).
- A video of an orchestra (e.g. the Melbourne Symphony orchestra playing the Bluey theme music): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvG7Bjg\\_Hzs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvG7Bjg_Hzs)

### Instructions:

1. Show the children a short video clip of an orchestra. Point out the role of the conductor, the orchestra and the sheet music/score.
2. Pre-teach important vocabulary with pictures/videos/visual supports:
  - Orchestra
  - Conductor
  - Percussion
  - Instrument
3. **Explain:**
  - That they are going to work together as an orchestra to play a piece of music.
  - That the teacher will start off as the conductor.
  - That they will be using their bodies as their instruments.
  - That they are going to use pictures to follow instructions and communicate without using words. This will be the score.

4. Show the children a picture of a hand. Discuss with them the different types of body percussion (sounds) you can make with your hands (e.g., clap, click, tap the floor), and then ask them to decide on their favourite. Repeat with feet (e.g., stamp, tap, shuffle) and mouth (e.g., clicking tongue, whistling, singing a note).
5. Agree with the children a "stop" signal (e.g. a stop sign or a raised hand).
6. Begin tapping out a steady beat on your knee and ask the children to join in. Point to the pictures to change the action to create a piece of body percussion music.
7. Invite some of the children to have a turn at being the conductor.

### Scaffolding:

- Pre-choose the action for each picture.
- Use only two pictures.
- Use hand-over-hand to help them join in with the action of making a noise, if appropriate.

### Extension:

- Add symbols for fast/slow, loud/quiet.
- Explore using rounds.
- Break the children into pairs or small groups and challenge them to create their own piece of body percussion music using the pictures.



**Think about:**

**Draw out from discussions:**

- How using pictures, actions and other visual supports can help us to communicate and understand what others say.
- Links to whole class visual timetable and other visual supports that you use in the classroom.

**You may want to ask:**

- Why did I use pictures to tell you what to do instead of saying it?
- Do you find it easier to know what to do when shown a picture instead of words? What about a picture and words together?
- Was it easy/hard to be the conductor using the pictures?

**Links to home learning:**

- Encourage the children to share their body percussion sounds at home.
- When out on a walk or travelling from place to place, what pictures/other visuals can they find that share information (e.g., traffic signs, shop logos, bin symbol, the green man).

Theme: We work together

## Activity title: Bridge building

### Learning objective/aim:

- To work as a team.

### Success criteria:

- I can listen to my friends.
- I can share my ideas.
- I can compromise to find a solution.

### Resources:

- Tuff trays (or something similar) with water in
- Large crates
- Planks of different lengths
- Large blocks/bricks
- Tyres
- Logs
- Any other appropriate outdoor equipment

### Instructions:

1. Show children pictures of bridges. Encourage discussion about bridges that they are familiar with.
2. Present the children with the outdoor resources.
3. **Explain:**
  - That they are going to use these resources to create a bridge over the water.
  - That they must work as team.
4. You may want to start with the story of the Gingerbread Man to inspire the children to make a bridge over the water for the Gingerbread Man to cross safely.
5. While the children are building, make comments about what they are doing. Support them to work as a team by helping them to listen to each other when needed (e.g., "I think X had an idea, shall we see what that was?"; "I wonder if X wants to have a go at building?").

6. Depending on the outdoor area and resources available to you, it may be more appropriate to complete this activity on a smaller scale. For example, using Lego bricks over a small water tray/bowl or using lolly sticks/junk modelling resources.

### Scaffolding:

- Allow some children to observe for a while before joining in. An adult could explain what is happening at this time.
- Provide suggestions for children to try.
- Split the children into smaller groups - some children may find a larger group overwhelming.
- Give each child an item to be 'in charge' of, to support any children who might not be as confident as others.

### Extension:

- Give children a role (e.g., designer, builder, manager) and encourage them to talk about their ideas before they start.
- Encourage the children to discuss any changes they can make to improve the structure.
- Test the bridge (if safe to do so!)



**Think about:**

**Draw out from discussions:**

- How it was easier to build a bridge by working as a team rather than by themselves.
- Occasions when they helped each other when something was difficult.
- Occasions when they listened to others and how this helped them to work well as a team.
- Occasions when they compromised and worked together to find a solution.

**You may want to ask:**

- What was good about working as a team?
- What was difficult about working as a team?
- How does it feel to have completed the bridge?

**Links to home learning:**

Families could encourage their child to work with other family members such as siblings or cousins to create a blanket fort or a den outside.

Theme: We hear everyone

## Activity title: Makaton

### Learning objective/aim:

To understand that we can communicate without talking.

### Success criteria:

- I can use and understand a simple sign.
- I know that a sign can carry meaning.

### Resources:

Link 1 [Really useful Makaton signs - CBeebies - BBC](#)

Link 2 [Mr Tumble's Nursery Rhymes - CBeebies - BBC](#)

### Instructions:

#### 1. Explain:

- What Makaton signs are.
  - We will be learning some Makaton signs today to help us sing some songs.
  - Signs can be used instead of, or alongside, talking.
  - Signs can help some children to communicate.
  - Signs can help all of us understand what someone else is saying because we can look at the same time as listening.
2. Use [link 1](#) to learn some common signs together. Children can practise signing and interpreting the signs in pairs.
  3. When ready, use [link 2](#) to learn a Makaton song. There are many to choose from so you may be able to pick one that links to your class interests or a current topic.

#### 4. Tips when teaching Makaton signs:

- Make sure you always say the word at the same time as signing it.
- Face the children so that they can see your hands, the signs and your facial expressions.
- Use clear, short sentences and use the sign or symbol for the important word in the sentence.
- Give children lots of opportunities to practise the signs within familiar songs.

### Scaffolding:

- Guide the child's hands so they can feel what it's like to perform the sign.
- Repeat the signs repeatedly; repetition helps.
- Repeat songs again and again while you model signs for the children.

### Extension:

- "Sing" the song wordlessly. Hum the tune together and use the signs.
- Introduce a "sign of the week" and use it extensively. By the end of the year, your class will have built up a huge bank of Makaton signs!
- You could also introduce Makaton to many of the existing songs your class know. Link 2 has many familiar rhymes.





**Think about:**

**Draw out from discussions:**

- How signing can help some children to communicate, especially if they find talking hard.
- How being able to 'see' a word (e.g., with a sign or other visual support) at the same time as hearing it can help us to understand and remember it.

**You may want to ask:**

- How can signing help some children to communicate?
- How does signing help us when we are listening?

**Links to home learning:**

Share the signs and songs that children have learnt with families to repeat at home.

Theme: We communicate confidently

## Activity title: Popcorn storytelling

### Learning objective/aim:

To work collaboratively to create a story.

### Success criteria:

- I listened to the people before me.
- I added an idea.
- I shared my idea with the group.

### Resources:

- Storyteller's prop (e.g. wooden spoon or toy microphone)
- An image of a setting available to start children off if needed (e.g. forest, beach, space, castle).

### Instructions:

1. Sit children in a circle so everyone can see each other easily.
2. **Explain:**
  - We are going to tell a story together.
  - That everyone can add one part.
  - Only the person holding the "storytelling prop" may speak.
  - That we must listen to the ideas that come before our turn, so that we add an idea that makes sense.
3. Hold the spoon while you say an opening line for the story (e.g., "Once upon a time in a big zoo, a tiny grey elephant...."). Display an image of a story setting on your board as a visual prompt.
4. Pass the spoon to the next child who adds a part and repeat until everyone has had a turn.
5. You may need to occasionally pause and recap the story so far for the children.
6. When everyone has had a turn, celebrate the story you have created together and have a go again as a whole class or in smaller groups.

### Scaffolding:

- Give two choices verbally (e.g. "Should the dog chase the cat or eat a bone?")
- Provide some images of common characters and items (e.g., princess, villain, magic wand, frog, volcano, witch, storm, boat, dragon).

### Extension:

- Once children have played the game as a class and understand the concept, they can play in small groups independently.

### Think about:

#### Draw out from discussions:

- How important it was to listen to what had come before in the story for it to make sense.
- How they used their imaginations to create their own story.
- How they spoke confidently to share their ideas on their turn.

#### You may want to ask:

- How did it feel to have to wait your turn?
- Was it easy/hard to listen to and remember the parts of the story that came before yours?
- How did it feel to share your part of the story with the group?

### Links to home learning:

This game can be played on long car journeys, around the dinner table or in a queue so encourage families to have a go!



Theme: We work together

## Activity title: Puzzle hunt

### Learning objective/aim:

To work as a team.

### Success criteria:

- I can work with my friends to solve a puzzle.
- I can listen to my friends and act on what they say.

### Instructions:

Cut the images into four pieces and hide them. There needs to be enough pieces for every child to find one. Depending on your class size you will need to use several images.

Split the children into teams of four.

Encourage the children to search the classroom for a piece of the puzzle. They must only find one. If they find one, they can help other children to find a piece.

Children then come back to the carpet and work together to try and make the full puzzle.

Encourage the children to work as a team to match the pieces together.

### Resources:

- Printed copies of the images included in the pack.
- (A3 or A4 – you may choose to laminate them)

### Scaffolding:

- Give the children the full image that they can use to place their pieces over.
- Stick image onto a coloured piece of paper before cutting and give children a particular colour to look for, this will support them to know which 'team' to be in when piecing them together.

### Extension:

- When children have become familiar with the activity, play again but use a countdown timer when finding pieces. If they don't have enough time to find all of them, work together to figure out what is missing.

### Think about:

#### Draw out from discussions:

- Emphasise to the children that without working together the puzzles will not be complete.
- How nice it was to accomplish something as a team and listen to each other to create the puzzle.

#### You may want to ask:

- How did it feel to work as a team?
- What was easy/hard about trying to solve the puzzle together?

### Links to home learning:

Parents might choose to do a similar activity at home, cutting up images from a magazine, newspaper or old colouring book.

Parents may also choose to help children understand the importance of working together through everyday activities, such as carrying large/heavy bags, etc.



Theme: We include everyone

## Activity title: Simon says

### Learning objective/aim:

To listen to and follow instructions.

### Success criteria:

- I can follow a simple verbal instruction.
- I know I need to listen to understand what to do next.

### Resources:

- A large room/hall, if possible
- A puppet/toy (optional)

### Instructions:

1. Give children some simple instructions to follow together as a warmup (e.g., touch your head, jump, clap your hands, spin around, reach up high, sit down).
2. **Explain:**
  - They are going to follow some more instructions now.
  - This time they must only follow the instruction if it begins with "Simon says...". You could also use a puppet/toy here to say, "Simon says...".
3. Begin very slowly, alternating giving some instructions with "Simon says..." at the beginning and some without.
4. Get faster and faster with the instructions to challenge children more and more!
5. Draw children's attention to how quickly something simple can become very challenging when they aren't given enough time to listen and think about what they hear.

### Scaffolding:

- Raise the puppet/toy in the air when giving a "Simon says..." instruction (and lower it when you're not) to add visual support.
- Over-exaggerate the "Simon says..." cue.
- Recognise that some children (including those with speech and language challenges) may need an adult next to them to help them listen out for the "Simon says..." part of the instruction.

### Extension:

- Invite a child to the front of the space to have a turn giving instructions.
- Play in pairs, threes or fours. Discuss afterwards how we could make it easier/harder for our friends to understand (e.g. by talking fast/slow).

### Think about:

#### Draw out from discussions:

- Draw the children's attention to what made the instructions easier or harder to understand (e.g. when it was slower/faster, when the puppet added a visual cue).

#### You may want to ask:

- How can we use what we've learnt today to help each other understand instructions?
- Why is it important for us to try and understand/include everyone?

### Links to home learning:

"Simon says..." is a well-known, traditional game to develop listening. Encourage families to play it at home with their child's favourite toy giving instructions!

Theme: We include everyone

## Activity title: Telephone

### Learning objective/aim:

To know the importance of good listening and that sometimes people misunderstand things.

### Success criteria:

- I can listen to someone else.
- I know that sometimes people misunderstand.
- I can suggest ways to help others understand.

### Resources:

A space large enough for everyone to sit in a circle.

### Instructions:

1. Sit children in a circle so everyone can see each other.
2. **Explain:**
  - The adult will start by passing a message to the person next to them by whispering it quietly in their ear so no one else can hear.
  - That person will then pass the message to the next person in the same way.
  - The last person says the message aloud and the first person tells them whether the message has changed or not.
3. Start with a simple, familiar message (e.g. "Twinkle, twinkle little star").
4. As the children become familiar with the game, you could make the sentences longer and less familiar (e.g. "I don't like brussels sprouts on my toast").
5. If the message has changed at the end, ask the group why they think that happened. For example, the speaker was too quiet, there was too much noise, someone misheard, etc.

### Scaffolding:

- Playing in small groups can help children who struggle to wait for their turn.
- Use shorter, more familiar sentences/phrases rather than long, unfamiliar sentences.

### Extension:

- You can play "Pass the pulse" in a similar way. Children hold hands and pass a message by squeezing the next person's hand (e.g., two quick squeezes, a pause, one long squeeze).

### Think about:

#### Draw out from discussion:

- How easy it can be to misunderstand what someone else has said.
- Ways that we can make it easier to listen and understand what was said.

#### You may want to ask:

What are some things we can do to help everyone listen and understand?

### Links to home learning:

Families could practise listening skills with their child by taking them on a nature hunt and telling them things to look for (e.g., Find me something smooth/bumpy, round/long, red, spotty, spiky, hard/soft).



Theme: We communicate confidently

## Activity title: What's in the bag/box

### Learning objective/aim:

- To identify and describe different textures through touch.

### Success criteria:

- I can explore different textures using my hands.
- I can describe the textures I feel.
- I can use descriptive vocabulary.

### Resources:

- Variety of objects with different textures (e.g., soft stuffed animal, smooth stone, rough sandpaper, bumpy balloon)
- Large bag or container (not see-through)
- Pictures of different textures (e.g., smooth, rough, bumpy, soft)
- Examples of different textures if you have them.

### Instructions:

1. This can be done in a small group or as a whole class.
2. Sit the children in a circle.
3. **Explain:**
  - We are going to play with a feelie bag.
  - We will be putting objects with different textures in the bag and guessing what they are by feeling them. No peeking!
4. Hand out objects with different textures for the children to touch. Talk about how they feel using words like 'smooth', 'rough', 'bumpy', 'soft', 'hard', 'silky', 'fuzzy', 'prickly'.
5. Put the objects into the bag and model putting your own hand in and describing what you can feel.
6. Let each child take a turn, encouraging them to describe the texture of the object they are feeling.

### Scaffolding:

- Give children a choice between two words (e.g. 'Does it feel smooth or bumpy?').
- Some children including those with speech and language challenges may not know many describing words. For those children, they could pull an object out of the bag and name it. Then you/other children could talk about how the object feels, modelling descriptive words for the child.

### Extension:

- Other children can guess what the object is based on the child's description.
- Challenge the children to use the objects to create a texture-based art project. They can glue the objects onto paper, draw around them, or use them to make sculptures.
- Introduce more objects with different textures, such as different fabrics, animal fur, or natural objects.
- Create a sensory bin with different textures (e.g., sand, rice, beans) and encourage the children to explore and describe the textures.
- Use the feelie bag activity to introduce the concept of opposites (e.g., smooth/rough, hard/soft, bumpy/flat).
- Use the feelie bag activity to teach the concept of shapes (e.g., round, square, triangle).



**Think about:**

**Draw out from discussion:**

- Any new words they have learnt to describe how things feel.

**You may want to ask:**

- How did it feel when your friends couldn't guess what you were describing?
- How did it feel when you weren't quite sure of the words to use to describe?

**Links to home learning:**

Send key vocabulary home and encourage families to talk about different textures around the home/outside.

Theme: We all have a voice

## Activity title: Process cooking – Playdough

### Learning objective/aim:

To follow instructions to make playdough.

### Success criteria:

- I can get the equipment that I need.
- I can follow the sequence cards.
- I can make my own playdough.

### Resources:

- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Measuring jug
- Wooden spoon
- 2 parts flour
- 1 part salt
- 1 part water
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- Food colouring
- Optional – scents/herbs/glitter/dried flowers
- The process cooking pictures (page 17)

### Instructions:

1. Add 2 parts flour to 1 part salt and water and 1 tablespoon of cream of tartar with your own measure of colouring/additions.

### Preparation:

2. Set up a process cooking station where children will follow pictured instructions to make playdough.
3. Line up the ingredients in order of use, with their corresponding information card.
4. Dry ingredients should go first and wet ingredients at the end.
5. Ensure the containers and objects used to measure are accessible for the children.

6. You may want an adult to keep hold of the food colouring, with the children asking for the colour they want.

### Explain:

7. We have run out of playdough and need to make some more.
8. We are going to use some picture cards to help us know what to do.

### Ask:

9. What ingredients and equipment we might need?
10. Show the children the process cooking cards. Look at the numbers on the cards. Which one do you think is first? Next? Then?
11. Talk through each of the pictured cards and what to do. Model how to use the cards as instructions for making the playdough. Measure out each ingredient and knead them together to make playdough.
12. The children will work in small groups or pairs to make their own playdough.

### Scaffolding:

- Model the activity and how to follow the instructions to small groups of children.
- Pair children who may need more support with a peer who can model the steps.
- Give choices (e.g. 'do you want red or blue?').

### Extension:

Children can experiment with different scents to add mixing colours and natural objects. Encourage the children to think about and experiment with mistakes (e.g., what would happen if we didn't follow the recipe? I wonder how it would feel if we put too much water in?)





**Think about:**

**Draw out from discussions:**

- How pictures can help us understand and remember what to do.
- Where else pictures might help us understand/know what to do (e.g., visual timetable in the classroom, street signs, etc).

**You may want to ask:**

- Was it easy/hard to follow the instructions?
- How did having a picture help?

**Links to home learning:**

Encourage families to cook simple dishes together and involve their children in simple food preparation. Send out key vocabulary and simple recipes for them to make together at home.

**Equipment/ingredients**



**Flour x 2**



**Salt x1**



**1 teaspoon of cream of tartare**



**Water x 1**



**Food colouring**



**Mix**



**Knead**



**Create**

