



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais | National Educational Psychological Service

# Activities to Develop Expressive Language Skills

## Primary 7 years+



**This NEPS Good Practice Guide was developed by educational psychologists. It is based on current knowledge in this area. It is intended as a guide only. Not all the suggestions here will apply to any one student or situation.**

## **Introduction**

The 23 activities in this resource pack are intended to be used by teachers and/ or parents to help develop the language skills of children, typically those in the age range 7 -12 years. They can be used with individuals, small groups or whole classes. They typically do not require any additional equipment or resources. We expect that these activities will be of particular use to children receiving School Support or School Support Plus.

There are two other NEPS Good Practice Guides focusing on language skills:

- **Activities to Develop Receptive Language and Comprehension Skills**  
(typically for children aged 7-12 years)
- **Language Group Activities**  
(typically for children aged 4-10 years and those at early stages of language development)

### Activity1. What am I?

1. I am part of a house, you look through me. (window)
2. I am part of a cup, you hold me. (handle)
3. I have legs, a mattress and a pillow. (bed)
4. I'm a prickly thing. I sleep from Autumn to Spring. (hedgehog)
5. I've four legs and you sit on me. (chair)
6. I'm black + white + read all over. (paper)
7. I carry your books to school. (school bag)
8. I've two arms and I tell the time. (clock)
9. I've a handle you open me to enter or leave. (door)
10. I'm full of rubbish. (bin)
11. I ring and you answer. (telephone)
12. You can cut with me. (scissors)
13. I can explain words for you. (dictionary)
14. I am made from wool and leather, I have fingers and thumbs. (gloves)
15. I swim in a pond and go quack. (duck)
16. I lock the door. (key)
17. I am used by many and blow a lot of hot air. (hairdryer)
18. I am in the computer room, I don't have legs but the mention of my name can frighten people. (mouse)
19. I have four prongs and you use me at dinner. (fork)

## Activity 2. Analogies

1. Bracelet is to arm as ring is to (finger)
2. Fingers are to hand as toes are to (foot)
3. A is to Z as beginning is to (end)
4. Run is to fast as crawl is to (slow)
5. Eyes are to see as ears are to (hear)
6. Uncle is to nephew as aunt is to (niece)
7. Dark is to night as light is to (day)
8. Kitten is to cat as puppy is to (dog)
9. Big is to small as huge is to (little)
10. Cry is to sad as smile is to (happy)
11. Man is to boy as woman is to (girl)
12. Leg is to knee as arm is to (elbow)
13. Thought is to think as caught is to (catch)
14. Day is to sun as night is to (moon)
15. Nobody is to somebody as nowhere is to (somewhere)
16. January is to February as June is to (July)
17. Mouse is to mice as child is to (children)
18. Belt is to waist as collar is to (neck)
19. Car is to vehicle as hammer is to (tool)
20. Spikes are to hedgehogs as feathers are to (bird)

Repeat above in reverse order.

### **Activity 3. Classifying. Describing ways three things are similar**

Children have to state what they have in common and how they are alike.

1. comb, rake, cat (teeth)
2. dog, rabbit, corn, (ears)
3. coat, pants, kangaroo (pockets)
4. table, tree, bush (leaves, wood)
5. carrot, parsnip, cucumber (veg)
6. jeans, swim wear, spot (tight)
7. table, chairs, people (legs)
8. cooker, sun, jumper (heat)
9. radiator, bottle, bath (water)
10. rice, noodles, tea (china)
11. shamrock, Guinness, leprechaun (Ireland)
12. bull-fight, Barcelona, tequila (Spain)
13. boy, man, clock (hands, face, run, tell time)
14. snake, cat, potato (eyes, skin)
15. car, house, shop (doors, lights, people inside)
16. carpenter, finger, toe (nails)
17. lamp, Croke Park, car (lights)
18. rollerblades, bicycle, skateboard (wheels, you have to get on)
19. jug, bottle, glass (containers)
20. newspaper, book, map (read)

#### **Activity 4. What could you use to:**

1. Pound a nail into a wall
2. Prevent a tree from blowing over in wind
3. Hold the window open
4. Get a cobweb down from a high ceiling
5. Paint picture if you have paints but no brush.
6. Mop up a spill
7. Rescue somebody who's drowning
8. Cut a piece of wood
9. Catch a wild animal/fish/mouse
10. Buy something
11. Make your hair curly
12. Break a window
13. Find a direction
14. Contact someone overseas
15. Invite somebody to a party
16. Write a letter
17. Eat rice / soup / stew / meat
18. Wake you up in the morning
19. Keep paper on a notice board
20. Catch a mouse

### **Activity 5. Silly Sentences**

Make silly sentence sensible by changing one or two words.

1. My hands hurt so much I can't walk.
2. I cut my finger and my elbow started bleeding.
3. Denis has two sisters her name is Maria.
4. I'm hungry because I can't find my coat.
5. My name is Bob and so is mine.
6. What's your name, Tom?
7. I want to hear absolute silence.
8. Don't eat with your mouth full.
9. Put the tables on the chairs.
10. If you want to go to the toilet put up your coat.
11. Put out the fridge and lock the door.
12. Are you reading that newspaper you're sitting on?
13. Is it yourself that's in it.
14. Do you have the time?
15. Jason put his crayons away and drew a picture.
16. The snow fell up onto the garden.
17. Mary put her scarf on her feet.
18. John put on his pajamas and went to play football.
19. Jane wrapped an elephant round her neck to keep warm.
20. Michelle closed the paper to see what was on TV.

**Activity 6. Selecting two words that go together from a set of three words and explain the relationship between the two words.**

1. see, eyes, pencil
2. banana, red, peel
3. bicycle, wheel, paper
4. tree, leaf, milk
5. table, chair, fork
6. Larry, straight, Mr. Bean
7. Grumpy, Sleepy, Liam
8. Lisa, Bart, Fred
9. Cabbage, carrot, car
10. tape, cd. Window
11. eye, ear, foot
12. coat, shoe, bag
13. pig, cow, grass
14. red, blue, up
15. milk, tea, bread
16. Ireland, England, Paris
17. geography, history, school
18. autumn, summer, January,
19. chalk, pencil, postman
20. apple, orange, turnip
21. Monday, Tuesday, summer

### **Activity 7. Rapidly naming things in different categories**

Divide class into two teams. Each team has one minute to name things that belong to a certain category.

1. Farm animals
2. Zoo animals
3. Things that come in bottles
4. Things that come in cans
5. Furniture
6. Types of cars
7. Shops
8. Occupations
9. Hobbies
10. Sweets
11. Toys
12. Fruit
13. Clothes
14. Countries
15. Counties/Towns
16. Insects
17. Computer games
18. Musical instruments
19. Teachers in school



### Activity 8. Finishing sentences by adding a rhyming word

1. Rain, rain, go away, come again another (day)
2. Don't turn around yet, you might get (wet)
3. The party's not far we can go in my (car)
4. I'll give you a dare, shake hands with a (bear/mare)
5. The man in the van had a (tan)
6. It was a hot day so we went to the (bay)
7. Jack put the rat in the (hat)
8. You must come to school, that is the (rule)
9. Put petrol in the car so we can go (far)
10. Go to the window, look out and see, there is something growing we call it a (tree)
11. You ask me why I walk so slow, turning the corner I stubbed my.... (toe)
12. We climbed up the mountain to drink from the (fountain)
13. Have no fear, I am (near/here)
14. Make each day sunny, by telling jokes and being (funny)
15. You'd better run fast or you'll come in (last)
16. If you don't look, I might read this (book)
17. Stop those fools they're breaking the (rules)
18. When I start to sing let all the bells (ring)
19. Sit down, put up your hand, then we'll listen to the (band)
20. I went to the shop to buy a mat but all I came home with was a (cat/hat/rat)

### **Activity 9. Team games using specific words.**

Divide class into three teams, present chosen word to class e.g flowers

Task for team one is to give sentence with flowers at beginning of sentence.

Task for team two is to give sentence, with flowers in the middle of sentence.

Task for team three is to give sentence with flowers at the end of sentence.

Give points for complete sentences only.

Alternate so each team has an opportunity to call out words in the beginning, middle and end.

Present words such as

1. cup
2. boats
3. beautiful
4. apples
5. fire
6. fear
7. people
8. try
9. does
10. think
11. giraffes
12. vegetables
13. swimming
14. bodies
15. call
16. money
17. buses
18. run
19. long

### **Activity 10. Sentence endings**

Ask the children to finish the sentence. Invite sensible, silly, creative endings.

1. When I blow bubbles...
2. My pet dragon
3. I think teachers like to
4. My favourite food is
5. I like to
6. I wish I was
7. I ate
8. I think school is
9. In my opinion
10. In ten years time i
11. I feel bad / good when
12. I suppose
13. I suggest / propose that
14. This sign means
15. They are as slow as
16. When you play football/the recorder/the computer/games
17. Water feels
18. Open the window
19. Turn the radio down

### **Activity 11. Brain storming**

Children name as many things in one or two minutes. Accept reasonable responses.

1. Items that wear out quickly
2. Items that last a long time
3. Words that rhyme with a given word e.g. sun, bun, fun
4. Words that begin or end with given sounds, prefixes, suffixes  
e.g. st.. .un.. .ish
5. Items in a given category e.g. fruits, vegetables, flowers,  
song titles, t.v. shows
6. Things people do in cold weather
7. Things you would see on a farm
8. Things in which people can travel
9. Things that make loud noises
10. Things that are usually coloured red
11. Things one might see in familiar locations e.g. airport, square
12. Things that are usually coloured green
13. Things we do in warm weather
14. Things to see en-route to school
15. Things that are expensive
16. Books you could read
17. Words that rhyme with, show etc.
18. Children's names
19. Items in my kitchen / bedroom
20. Programmes on television
21. Things we do for our parents
22. Things which are plugged in

**Activity 12. Completing sentences with words beginning with given sounds.**

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| 1.  | They screamed when they saw the m         | machine<br>monster<br>man<br>mouse       |
| 2.  | Sandra asked if she could go to the l     | library<br>lake<br>loo                   |
| 3.  | Joe wished he could turn into a r         | rabbit<br>robot<br>rock                  |
| 4.  | As I was going down the road I saw the b. | Bell<br>Bus<br>Banana                    |
| 5.  | Mary laughed when she heard the c         | clock<br>cat<br>cow                      |
| 6.  | If I had the money I would buy s          | sweets<br>stickers<br>stamps             |
| 7.  | As a present I would like p.              | posters<br>pencils .<br>pens             |
| 8.  | On my way to school I fell over a d.      | Doll<br>Dog<br>Duck                      |
| 9.  | For my lunch I brought f                  | Fruit<br>Fig-rolls<br>Fork               |
| 10. | My Mammy brought home a t.                | take away<br>teddy bear<br>table<br>tape |

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 11. Jenny lost her w.                                     | watch<br>wellies<br>Walkman                  |
| 12. I woke up early because I heard a s.                  | stolen car<br>siren<br>scream                |
| 13. Paddy fed his p                                       | parents<br>pets<br>parrot                    |
| 14. They saved hard because they really wanted to go to C | Cork<br>Canada<br>Corfu                      |
| 15. Jane was on her way home when she found a h           | hose<br>hat<br>horse                         |
| 16. We all decided to give up s.                          | smokes<br>sweets<br>swearing                 |
| 17. The party was a huge success because of the f.        | food<br>fireworks<br>fun                     |
| 18. For the competition Lisa decided to write about the v | village<br>volcano<br>violin<br>variety show |
| 19. At the opening of the hospital I spoke to a n.        | nurse<br>nun<br>neighbor<br>nephew           |

### Activity 13. Describing similarities and differences between objects

1. chair, stool
2. cat, elephant
3. river, lake
4. rollerblades, skateboard.
5. shoe, boot
6. car, lorry
7. eyebrow, eyelash
8. light, torch
9. swan, goose
10. shoe, sock
11. picture, blind
12. jumper, cardigan
13. doctor, nurse
14. school, cinema
15. hand, foot
16. book, copy
17. shower, bath
18. policeman, postman
19. butcher, baker
20. glasses, binoculars



#### **Activity 14. What would you do if...**

1. If you were at the Square and forgot where you had arranged to meet your friend.
2. If you dropped a glass of water on the floor.
3. If you arrived home from school and there was nobody at home.
4. If you got lost.
5. If you won €100.
6. If your money was stolen.
7. If you couldn't find your clothes after swimming.
8. If you couldn't do your homework.
9. If you were accused in the wrong.
10. If your baby brother/sister went missing.
11. If your house was burgled.
12. If you got soaked on the way to school.
13. If your T.V was broken.
14. If you woke up in the year 1916.
15. If you were in town and saw a robbery.
16. If your house got burned.
17. If you had no milk for breakfast.
18. If you saw a mouse in the kitchen.
19. If the baby scribbled on your library book.
20. If a stranger offered you a lift.

**Activity 15. Speculating on the meaning of nonsense words used in sentences**

1. Bring me the franstran.
2. One of my favourites is a ritzzig.
3. She really knows how to freeble.
4. I caught two friffles.
5. Where are my beansnalls.
6. I saw a gotair.
7. Everyone should have a hoopscalator during the winter.
8. Bring me my nero later.
9. The girl carried the ipside.
10. The car crashed into the fringfrong.
11. I bought a new radit.
12. He was embarrassed when his frumster blew away.
13. When the diptuch rang everybody truffled.
14. She wore a new freegle.
15. The car skidded over the womba.
16. Look out, that is a scrunker.
17. There are not many hammerigs left.
18. Where would you go to see a crabbier erk.
19. I don't like it because of its screegle.
20. Robodo is something everyone likes.



## Activity 16. Nonsense Words

Give a nonsense word and get child to put it in a sentence.

1. Inted
2. glog
3. rendam
4. potskow
5. fulvid
6. harfar
7. scohg
8. plab
9. luddering
10. plote
11. moggie
12. zince
13. knax
14. stlos
15. gottle
16. quitted
17. jasp
18. mxit
19. lapo
20. dipo



### **Activity 17. Creating sentences using three given words**

1. favourite, my, food
2. computer, talk, answers
3. ambulance, hurry, call
4. mountain, day, rain
5. ticket, journey, see
6. football, weather, referee
7. tree, bird, south
8. jeans, puddle, Mike
9. cold, winter, coal
10. runner, Olympic, medal
11. teacher, pupil, classroom
12. boots, races, long
13. frost, inspector, train
14. harmful, sun, holidays
15. book, story, favourite,
16. music, soothing, CD.
17. elephant, piano, tusks
18. scarf, snowman, carrot
19. bicycle, road, hospital
20. pencil, fire, school

**Activity 18. Creating sentences of increasing length using words beginning with same sound.**

1. Sally saw my sister / Sally saw my sister Susie etc
2. Andy ate
3. Billy bought
4. Ciara carried
5. Denise drank
6. Eddie enjoyed
7. Frankie flew
8. Gary grasped
9. Henry hid
10. Ian invited
11. Jackie jumped
12. Kathy kicked
13. Laura lied
14. Mandy moaned
15. Nora nudged
16. Oliver opened
17. Peter put
18. Quentin quickly
19. Roberta rolled
20. Tessie took
21. Unlucky Una
22. Vicious vampires
23. Wandering witches

### **Activity 19. What would happen if...**

1. People did not have ears
2. The sun never set
3. No one drank milk
4. Everyone looked alike
5. Teacher did not come in.
6. If you never went to bed
7. If there was no TV.
8. If you ate sweets all the time.
9. If there were no school rules.
10. If we all had the same name
11. If aliens landed.
12. If there was no heat in the school.
13. If it snowed for six months.
14. If water became sticky.
15. If there were no animals.
16. If steel became soft.
17. If the rain stopped forever.
18. If trees grew down instead of up.
19. If the electricity was cut off
20. If nothing would burn.
21. If everyone went deaf

**Activity 20. Giving and following step by step directions for a task.**

Give robot instructions for .....

1. Tying a shoe
2. Drawing x on the blackboard
3. Shaking hands with someone.
4. Washing the dishes.
5. Boiling a kettle
6. Making a sandwich
7. Putting on your coat
8. Going as far as the door
9. Brushing your hair
10. Making a telephone call
11. Putting on a CD. / Tape
12. Taping a TV programme
13. Reading a book
14. Brushing the floor
15. Putting dishes in the press
16. Making a bed
17. Cleaning your teeth
18. Washing the windows
19. Opening the door
20. Putting on a light switch

### Activity 21. Providing the question for a given answer

1. Its 10 o'clock ..... what time is it?
2. No, he won't bite..... will the dog bite?
3. I'm 10 years old ..... how old are you?
4. It is cold ..... is it cold?
5. No, I didn't..... did you eat your lunch?
6. I forgot.....why didn't you do your homework
7. Two sisters and one brother .....how many brothers and sisters have you?
8. Mary broke the window ..... who broke the window?
9. I came on the bus .....how did you come?
10. I went there yesterday .....when did you go there?
11. If I had the money ..... would you buy a pair of jeans for €100.
12. Because you told me to.....why did you do it?
13. It's the 17 March ..... when is St. Patrick's day?
14. A drop of milk and a spoon of sugar.....how do you like your tea?
15. Jenny by ten months ..... who is the eldest?
16. I'm sure I could ..... could you
17. The Borrowers ..... what film did you go to see?
18. Because it's raining .....why did you bring your coat? etc..
19. She / he filled my tooth..... what did the dentist do to you?
20. We went to Cork, Trabolgan Spain etc) .....where did you go on holidays?

**Activity 22. Naming an object that could be described by a series of words and justifying the answer.**

1. shelves, door, cold, electric (fridge).
2. round, yellow, large, bitter (grapefruit).
3. frozen, wet, delicious (ice-pop).
4. four, ears, tail, bark (dog).
5. leaves, cover, chapter, page (book)
6. bread, butter, filling (sandwich)
7. wheels, handlebar, saddle (bike)
8. long, narrow, pointy (pencil)
9. round, light, full of air (balloon)
10. bright, yellow, hot (sun)
11. woolly, round necked, warm (jumper)
12. container, spout, handle (tea)
13. soft, spreadable, creamy (butter)
14. wet, white, refreshing (milk)
15. sticky, clear, in bottles (glue)
16. black, dirty, hard (coal)
17. squishy, pliable, colourful, soft (playdough)
18. sweet, granular, white (sugar)
19. tall, dark, handsome (man)
20. dark, sweet, refreshing, full of additives (fizzy drink)

**Activity 23. Forming word chains by naming words associated with the previous word said**

1. in, out, outside sideways
2. up
3. lilac
4. cold
5. tea
6. soccer
7. pop
8. home
9. one
10. quiet
11. book
12. spice
13. chair
14. girl
15. play

