ORAL LANGUAGE SUPPORT CHECKLIST

Using graphic organisers to support students with oral language difficulties | Years 3–8

Purpose: Use before, during and after classroom discussion to make ideas visible, model language and build independence.

1. Make spoken instructions accessible

- ■ Give one clear instruction at a time.
- ■ Use the organiser to show what students need to find or explain.
- ■ Reintroduce more complex curriculum language after initial understanding.

2. Teach key vocabulary explicitly

- ■ Select 2–4 essential words from the text or topic.
- ■ Explain, model and revisit each word in meaningful sentences.
- ■ Add key words to the relevant sections of the organiser.

3. Make relationships between ideas visible

- ■ Model how to record key information in the organiser.
- ■ Use arrows, headings or categories to show relationships.
- ■ Ask students to point to information before explaining it.

4. Model complete spoken sentences

- ■ Think aloud while turning organiser notes into sentences.
- ■ Offer a sentence starter when needed (e.g., “The river flooded because…”).
- ■ Encourage students to explain one complete idea at a time.

5. Expand and recast student responses

- ■ Expand short responses by adding useful detail.
- ■ Recast inaccurate grammar without interrupting the discussion.
- ■ Invite students to try the improved sentence when appropriate.

6. Allow processing and response time

- ■ Ask one clear question, then wait without immediately rephrasing.
- ■ Allow students to consult or point to the organiser.
- ■ Offer a cue or choice only if further support is needed.

7. Gradually remove scaffolds

- ■ High support: model and complete a sentence together.
- ■ Moderate support: provide a starter and ask the student to select ideas.
- ■ Independent: ask for an explanation without a supplied starter.

Quick reflection Which support helped today? What can I reduce next time?