



CURRICULUM GUIDE

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Confident communication is the foundation of all personal and professional growth. Our mission is to provide children from underserved communities with engaging lessons that strengthen public speaking and communication skills. By teaching children to find their voices and organize their thoughts, we hope to set them up for success later in life in whatever endeavors they may pursue.

~Teach4Speech Team

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- The Teach4Speech program is designed to take place over the course of 10 weeks with one session a week
- Each session is ~30 minutes in length and reinforces a different skill
- There will be various activities throughout the course to keep students engaged and measure their progress
- The goal for this program is that the students will become more confident and concise speakers after the 10 sessions

Session Topics

Session 1	Introduction & Filler Word Game
Session 2	SPAR Debate & Filler Word Game
Session 3	Categories & SPAR Debate
Session 4	Speech Circle & SPAR
Session 5	Categories & Double Trouble Filler Word Game
Session 6	Charades & Taboo
Session 7	Taboo & Filler Word Game
Session 8	Double Trouble Filler Word Game & Shark Tank
Session 9	SPAR & Taboo
Session 10	Final Filler Word Game & Student Choice

SESSION 1

Lesson Objectives

- Introduce the program and how it works
- Collect intake data via the student surveys
- Help students understand how to play the filler word game

Lesson Plan

Program Introduction (5 min)

- Explain that they will be playing fun games involving speaking to the class and debating with their peers.
- Frame the sessions as **games** and not as lessons.

Intake Survey (5 min)

- Have each student fill out a copy of the survey found on page 17 in the appendix.
- Students will fill out this survey at the beginning and the end of the program to gauge their improvement in speaking confidence.
- Read each survey question out loud as students bubble in their answers.

Filler Word Game (20 min) ***Instructions on page 10***

- The objective of this game is to see how long the speaker can talk about a given topic without pausing or saying filler words such as “uhhhh” or “likeeee”
- Be sure to record each student’s initial speaking time (typically around 10 seconds) so that it can be compared to later speeches
 - If not all students play, there will be another opportunity for initial speaking data during session 2.
- Brainstorm with students to identify what strategies people used to speak longer (e.g. talking slowly, brainstorming talking points before speaking, connecting to their own lives, etc.)
- Encourage them to try out these strategies next time they play the game

SESSION 2

Lesson Objectives

- Introduce argumentative speeches to the students
- Ensure that all or most students have played the filler word game

Lesson Plan

SPAR (Spontaneous Argumentation) (20 min) [*Instructions on page 12*](#)

- In this activity students have a small debate about a given topic.
- OPTIONAL: The topic for this first debate is “pancakes vs. waffles”
- When picking a winner of the debate, discuss the use of filler words in student speeches and how less filler words can make a speech more persuasive.

Filler Word Game (10 min) [*Instructions on page 10*](#)

- Make sure each student in the class has played at least once and has a time recorded
- After each student, discuss with the class what else they could have talked about to lengthen their speech (e.g., history of the topic, stories about to the topic, etc.)

SESSION 3

Lesson Objectives

- Test student’s improvisational skills with word association game
- Solidify student’s understanding of the SPAR debates

Lesson Plan

Categories (10 min) [*Instructions on page 13*](#)

- In this activity, one student has 30 seconds to name as many words as possible related to a given category.
- After each student goes, ask the class what other words they could have said

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE

- At the end of the activity, ask the students whether it was easier to come up with words when they were the speaker or when they were part of the audience.
 - Have a discussion with the class about why it might be harder to come up with words when you are the speaker (for example: time pressure and large audiences put you on the spot, create stress/anxiety which makes it harder to think on your feet).

SPAR (Spontaneous Argumentation) (20 min) [*Instructions on page 12*](#)

- When playing SPAR this time, challenge the presenters to use as few filler words as possible.
- OPTIONAL: The topic for this debate is “cats vs. dogs”.
- After the debate, discuss what each team did well and how they could improve.
 - For example, looking up when speaking, speaking loudly and clearly, using persuasive devices such as anecdotes or imagery, using relevant examples to support their points, etc.

SESSION 4

Lesson Objectives

- Practice improvisational skills with speech circle game
- Continue to develop argumentative speaking skills with SPAR

Lesson Plan

Speech Circle (10 min) [*Instructions on page 14*](#)

- The goal of this game is to have students practice coming up with things to say about a given topic on the spot

SPAR (Spontaneous Argumentation) (20 min) [*Instructions on page 12*](#)

- Use the same groups that were being used for the previous activity
- OPTIONAL: The topic for this debate is “books vs. movies”
- If there are other divisive topics that the class might be more interested in, feel free to use those!

SESSION 5

Lesson Objectives

- Transition students to more difficult version of the filler word game

Lesson Plan

Categories (10 min) ***Instructions on page 13***

- In this activity, one student has 30 seconds to name as many words as possible related to a given category.
- After each student goes, ask the class what other words they could have said

Filler Word Game (5 min) ***Instructions on page 10***

- The objective of this game is to see how long the speaker can talk about a given topic without pausing or saying filler words such as “uhhhh” or “likeeee”

Double Trouble Filler Word Game (15 min) ***Instructions on page 11***

- Play with a new rule: players must incorporate TWO topics provide by the class rather than just one (i.e. give a speech incorporating the topics “turtle” and “cupcake.”)
- Discuss how having two topics to talk about leads to longer speech times and how this relates to speech giving.

SESSION 6

Lesson Objectives

- Introduce Taboo game
- Practice using language creatively and efficiently

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE

Lesson Plan

Charades (15 min)

- Warm the class up for Taboo with Charades. Most students will know how to play this game
- Whisper the name of a topic to a child (i.e. surfing). They have to act out the topic for their peers to guess
- After a few rounds of this, transition to Taboo

Taboo (15 min) ***Instructions on page 15***

- The objective of this game is to inspire creativity in the students by making them come up with new ways to talk about their topic
- Students may choose their own words as well!! (As long as they are approved by you)

SESSION 7

Lesson Objectives

- Increase the difficulty of Taboo
- Continue to drill filler word game

Lesson Plan

Taboo (20 min) ***Instructions on page 15***

- The objective of this game is to inspire creativity in the students by making them come up with new ways to talk about their topic.

Filler Word Game (10 min) ***Instructions on page 10***

- The objective of this game is to see how long the speaker can talk about a given topic without pausing or saying filler words such as “uhhhh” or “likeeee”

SESSION 8

Lesson Objectives

- Support students in developing their delivery skills
- Practice persuasive speech skills with Shark Tank

Lesson Plan

Double Trouble Filler Word Game (10 min) [*Instructions on page 11*](#)

- The same as the usual filler word game but players must incorporate TWO topics provided by the class rather than just one.

Shark Tank (20 min) [*Instructions on page 16*](#)

- The goal of this game is to have students creatively pitch a product or object found in the room to the rest of the class.

SESSION 9

Lesson Objectives

- Expand on student argumentation and rebuttal skills in SPAR
- Support students in improving their creative speech skills

Lesson Plan

SPAR (20 min)

- The objective of this activity is for each student to develop specific ideas about a topic and then to present their ideas to the class in a short speech.
- OPTIONAL: The topic for this debate is “Space vs. The Ocean”

Taboo (10 min)

- OPTIONAL: The words for this session are:
 - Snake, Password, Camping, Shopping, Bat, Floss, Glasses, PE, Breakfast

SESSION 10

Lesson Objectives

- Collect outtake data with the exit surveys
- Engage with students in further developing their speaking skills

Lesson Plan

Exit Survey (5 min)

- Have students fill out copies of form on the next page, gauging their comfort level speaking now that the course is complete.

Filler Word Game (20 min)

- Have every student play the game one more time, recording their final times as outtake data

Student Choice! (10 min)

- Allow the class to pick one of their favorite games (other than the filler word game) to play for the next 10 minutes



ACTIVITY GUIDE

How to Play: Filler Word Game

Game Objective: see how long the speaker can talk about a given topic without pausing or saying filler words such as “uhhhh” or “likeeee”

Instructions

1. Explain the game rules to students.
2. With students sitting at their desks, pick one student to come to the front of the class and be the speaker.
3. Have the other students shout out ideas for different topics (e.g. “cats”, “video games”, “pizza”) and let the speaker pick which one to talk about.
 - If students are having trouble coming up with topics, you can inspire them by mentioning ideas like sports, foods, animals, colors, etc., or giving suggestions from the topic bank below.
4. Ask the speaker to try to talk for as long as they can about their subject without using a filler word or pausing for a long time. Some examples of filler words would be “uhhh”, “like”, “sooo”, “basically”, “you know”, or any word that allows them to continue talking but doesn’t add meaning.
5. Start the timer when they begin speaking and stop it when they pause or use a filler word (be lenient and offer multiple chances the first few times)
6. Record their time on the board and then pick a new speaker.

Suggestions

- It may be helpful for the teacher to be the first speaker to demonstrate the game to students. Ask students to stop you from speaking (by yelling out stop) when they hear you use a filler word. Talk for ~10 seconds about the topic and then stop to say “umm” and let students point out the filler word.
- Framing the game as a competition, i.e., “who can get the longest speaking time”, will engage the class more.
- Students can discuss anything related to the topic (e.g. why they like/dislike it, how it connects to their life, what they know about it), as long as they are speaking continuously.

Topic Bank

- The following topics may be used for students to talk about
- These are only suggestions, and can be used if the class is running out of ideas and needs more inspiration.

TOPIC BANK ON FOLLOWING PAGE

Filler Word Game Topic Bank

Soccer	Christmas	Pancakes	Computers	Sports Teams
Football	Halloween	Dance	Clowns	Chores
Basketball	Birthdays	Homework	Turtles	Summer
Minecraft	Books	School	Magic	Winter
Roblox	Countries	Teachers	Balloons	Spring
Superheroes	The Ocean	Drawing	Umbrellas	Fall
Dogs	The Zoo	TV Shows	Tornadoes	Pokemon
Cats	Weather	Dinosaurs	Hats	
Horses	Cartoons	Outer Space	Coffee	
Birds	Friends	Swimming Pools	Siblings	
Harry Potter	Family	Circuses	Pets	
Taylor Swift	Nature	Amusement Park	Rainbows	
Music	Cars	Chess	The Beach	
Math	Doctors	Board Games	Picnics	
Science	Fishing	Fireworks	Hiking	
History	Surfing	Superpowers	Camping	
Pizza	Cooking	Robots	Trains	
Ice cream	Video Games	Aliens	Comic Books	
Sushi	Glasses	French Fries	Instagram	
Airplanes	Clothing	Hamburgers	Snapchat	
iPhones	Chocolate	Fruit	TikTok	

Filler Word Game: Double Trouble

This version of the filler word game has the same rules, except now the speaker must give a speech about **two** topics without pausing or saying filler words such as “uhhhh” or “likeeee”

Instructions

1. Follow the same rules as the regular filler word game
2. When picking a topic, ask the speaker to choose **TWO** of the topics that the class suggests
3. Ask the student to integrate both of these two topics in their speech as they try to talk for as long as possible

Suggestions

- Students may have trouble including both topics into their speech at first
- They can make it easier by choosing two topics that relate to each other.
- You can prompt them to discuss how these two topics connect to each other, how they are similar/different, which one is more important and why, etc.

How to Play: Spontaneous Argumentation (SPAR)

Game Objective: have the class debate a topic and practice giving persuasive speeches

Instructions

1. Explain the game rules to students, and introduce what topic the class will be “debating” (e.g., dogs vs. cats).
2. Split the class into two even groups and assign each group a topic to argue for. For example, half of the class will be team dogs and the other half will be team cats.
3. Have each group gather on different sides of the room. Give them several minutes to discuss together and prepare 3 arguments for why their topic is good, and 3 arguments for why the other teams topic is bad.
4. Have each group elect two spokespeople - one will present the first 3 arguments to the class and the other will present the second 3 arguments.
5. Once the groups are finished preparing (around 5 minutes), ask the spokespeople from each group to come up to the front of the room and present their arguments.
6. After both groups have presented, allow the groups to get back together and come up with 2-3 rebuttals to the other teams points.
7. Each group should choose a new spokesperson to present these rebuttals to the class.
8. After this, the debate is over and you can choose a “winner” and discuss what the team did well.

Suggestions

- Help the students along if they need it by giving examples of good arguments.
- Make note as the students present of what they did well and what could be improved so that you can give them feedback after the debate.
- Emphasize that in order to win the debate, students must convince you that their topic is better - this prompts them to come up with solid arguments.

Topic Bank

- The following topics can be used for SPAR debates.
- These are our suggestions, but teachers are encouraged to let students come up with their own topics.

TOPIC BANK ON FOLLOWING PAGE

SPAR Topic Bank

Cats vs. Dogs
Pancakes vs. Waffles
Summer vs. Winter
Beach vs. Mountains
Cities vs. Countryside
Reading Books vs. Watching Movies
Soda vs. Juice
Parents vs. Siblings
Ocean vs. Land
Talking Online vs. Talking in Real Life

Computers vs. Phones
Math vs. English
Cartoon vs. Live Action
Sweet vs. Spicy
Aliens vs. Robots
Video Games vs. Board Games
Snowboarding vs. Skiing
Planes vs. Trains
Pie vs. Pizza
Jungle vs. Desert

How to Play: Categories

Game Objective: Challenge each student to name as many words as possible related to a given category in 30 seconds.

Instructions

1. Explain to students that you will assign each person who volunteers a category, and they will have 30 seconds to name as many words that fall into that category as possible.
2. Pick one person to be the first speaker.
3. Have them stand up and give them a topic from the topic bank.
4. Set a timer for 30 seconds and tell them when to start.
5. Count how many topics they are able to name and record their number on the board.
6. After they sit down, ask the rest of the class to shout out other words they could have named. Then pick the next speaker.

Suggestions

- This game seems quite simple when explained, but it becomes much more difficult to come up with words when you are speaking in front of a group and under time pressure.
- Keep a record of the high score so that the students can try to beat it next time the game is played.

Topic Bank

- Assign students a category from the following bank, or come up with your own

TOPIC BANK ON FOLLOWING PAGE

Categories Game Topic Bank

Sports	Books	Outer Space	The Beach	The Park
Superheroes	Countries	Circus	Camping	Desserts
Music Genres	Weather	Fruit	Movies	Kitchen Items
Hot Things	Nature	Ice Cream Flavors	Technology	Types of Shoes
Cold Things	Pizza Toppings	Vegetables	Pets	Tall Things
Breakfast Foods	Shapes	Water	The Desert	Uses for a Towel
Instruments	Snacks	Transportation	Fast Food Chains	Foods with Eggs

How to Play: Speech Circle

Game Objective: Have students practice coming up with things to say about a given topic on the spot

Instructions

1. Split the class into two groups and give each group a “starter sentence” for a storyline along with a handheld object, such as a marker or hat.
 - A starter sentence could be, “Once upon a time ...” or “Martha saw a fox one day...”
2. The object gets passed to someone randomly in the circle, and they have to continue the story
3. Whoever is holding the object first must start the speech. Once they have said AT LEAST two sentences, they toss the object to another student in the circle.
4. Have the students continue passing the object around until the speech/story is complete, then assign them a new topic if there is time.

Suggestions

As the instructor, walk around the room and ensure that the storylines do not end or run dry. If a story has naturally concluded, you can give the group a new sentence starter for them to begin a new story.

Sample Storyline Starters

- “The footsteps started to creak as the boy walked down the stairs ...”
- “The lights flickered on and off...”
- “The car screeched to a halt...”
- “Once upon a time, there was a turtle named Sally who lived in a pond...”
- “The castle on top of the hill was grey and spooky....”

How to Play: Taboo

Game Objective: Students must talk about a topic without saying the word itself and their classmates must try to guess the word

Instructions

1. Explain the game rules to students.
2. You can do this in multiple groups of 5 students (preferred) or as a class
3. One student comes to the front of the group (or class) to speak.
4. Pick a word or phrase from the topic bank, write it down, and show it to the speaker (do not say it out loud)
5. The speaker must give a speech describing the word, but they are not allowed to say the word itself.
 - For example, if the word is “cat” the student might say “this is an animal with whiskers and a tail”.
 - If the word is butterfly, they cannot say the word “butter” OR “fly”.
 - They cannot act out the word.
6. As they speak, the rest of the group can call out what they think the word is.
7. The speaker must continue to speak until the class guesses the word correctly.
8. If the speaker accidentally says the word, pick a new word for them and have them start again.

Suggestions

- Taboo challenges students to use language creatively and think outside of the box - give students encouragement if they use a particularly creative way of describing a topic
- If you want to engage students more, or the regular version is too easy, Taboo can be turned into a competition similar to charades.
 - To do this, split the class into two teams and have one person from each team come up at a time. Give them a word and start a timer for 15 seconds. If their team guesses the word before time is up they get a point.
 - Adjust the time limit depending on how hard it seems for students. The goal is for the class to be able to guess the word the majority of the time, but still be challenged.
 - The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Topic Bank

Hungry	Wind	Trashcan	Pear	Headache
Snowflake	Shower	Snowman	Glove	Debate
Proud	Freezer	Hair Salon	Dance	Promise
Dragonfly	Plane Ticket	Makeup	Melt	Theater
Penguin	Straw	Alligator	Daisy	Laundry
Speech	Blossom	Worry	Distance	Dishwasher
Glass	Taxi	Shampoo	Needle	Match
	Witch	Radio	Famous	Hippo

How to Play: Shark Tank

Game Objective: have each student “sell” the class an object from their backpack or around the classroom.

Instructions

1. Many students will have heard of the game Shark Tank, where entrepreneurs pitch their products to investors. Introduce this game as a mini version of Shark Tank, where students must find an object from around the room - a pencil, jacket, backpack, etc., - and “sell” it to the rest of the class.
2. Have each student find an object and practice pitching their object to a partner or two.
 - o Give students ideas for what to talk about in their pitch such as why the object is useful, how durable or cheap it is, or other benefits of owning the object.
3. After everyone has done a practice pitch, take volunteers to come to the front of the room and give their object pitch to the class (pitches should be around 30 seconds to a minute long).
4. Once they are finished, ask the “investors” (other students) to raise their hands and ask questions or say why they would or wouldn’t buy the object.
5. Give the speaker a chance to respond to these comments and then pick a new speaker to start the next round.

Suggestions

- Help the students along if they need it by giving examples of ways to persuade someone that they should buy an object.
- Encourage students to pick a unique object, rather than just a pencil or pen, as this will force them to be more creative in their pitches.

STUDENT TRACKER

- Please access the Tracker at this [link](#) to record student progress throughout the program.
- Each tab corresponds to one session.
- You can create your own editable copy of the tracker (File --> Make a copy)
- Please return the completed tracker to teach4speech.outreach@gmail.com

FILLER WORD

Instructions: Rank the student's speech for each variable on a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high). Speaking time should be recorded by stopwatch.

Student Name	Topic	Speaking Time	Quality of Speech	Confidence	Vocabulary/Fluency	Content
			/10	/10	/10	/10

Daily Summary	
# of Boys Speaking	
# of Girls Speaking	
# of New Speakers	
% Of Class Volunteering	
Rate speeches overall	/10

Teacher Comments:

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STUDENT SURVEY

Age:

Name:

Date:

Which of the following do you identify as?

Boy

Girl

Which of these options best describes you?

White or Caucasian

Hispanic or Latino

Asian

Black or African American

Other: _____

Please mark how much you agree with each statement from 1-5:

	1	2	3	4	5
	No (Disagree)				Yes (Agree)

It is easy for me to talk in groups

It is easy for me to talk with my friends

It is easy for me to talk with teachers

It is easy for me to give a speech to the entire class

I am not nervous when talking to a new person or make a new friend

I like school and learning

It is hard for me to think when I am speaking in front of a group

I often forget what I was going to say during a speech

My heart beats faster when I give a speech

I get nervous when my teacher says we are going to give speeches

I am scared to speak up in conversations

What do you want to be when you grow up?