

Verbal Reasoning

To be able to reason and problem solve requires a combination of advanced language and thinking skills. The ability to move beyond the basic cause and effect stage of understanding and predicting sequences and solving problems, happens in normal development between the age of four and a half to six years.

It is possible to introduce this complex skill area once children have progressed with their language development to a stage where they can:

- understand two key word instructions
- understand and use basic past tense
- relate items which go together e.g. knife and fork
- relate items together in category sets e.g. things we can eat
- recognise and explain similarities and differences between items
- answer What? Who? & Where? questions
- describe a scene in a picture

Once these pre-requisite skills are in place you can go on to introduce other language and thinking skills which allow a child to develop verbal reasoning.

It is important to introduce each skill area in the order listed as earlier skills are needed to achieve success at the next level.

Skill development

Skill Area	Resources
<p>1. Following longer spoken instructions & directions Think about the level at which the child can understand spoken language and about their auditory memory ability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening Skills Key Stage 1, An Apple for the Teacher Publication 1994 • Leap into Listening, Super Duper School Co. Workbooks. • Say and Do Workbooks 1 and 2. Super Duper School Co. • P.E. Lessons
<p>2. Sequencing Understanding a logical sequence helps a child learn to predict the next step. Learning how to link events in a sequence using the appropriate language involves answering the question 'What happens next?'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing the language of sequence i.e. words such as 'first, and then, next, at the end, last, before, after' • LDA Sequential Thinking Sets • LDA 'And Then' Pack • Story Telling – making up stories with picture cue cards. Creating a title to summarise your story. • Reading a book together and then recalling and retelling the story • Taking photographs of a child carrying out an activity and then using them to retell the sequence of what they did. • Role playing a familiar sequence, either acting it out together or using play people or other toys to act out the events. • News Time – supporting children to recall and retell an event to the class. • Reading for Meaning, Learning Materials Ltd - sections on sequencing
<p>3. Prediction A child is only able to predict if they can remember a logical sequence. It helps if they have some life experience of the sequence of events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembering what happens next in a familiar story • Working out what may happen next from knowledge of cause and effect, routine and previous experience • Using pictures/photographs to make a visual time line to help the child gain independence to predict, plan & organise themselves for future events.
<p>4. Putting yourself in someone else's role (understanding others)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking on the role of a character in a story sequence which may have been practised at Level 2. Start with events which are within the

<p>This skill requires the child to make decisions about how someone may think and feel in a given situation. This area of development is particularly difficult for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.</p>	<p>child's own experience so they are better able to know how the person may think and feel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on emotional vocabulary may be needed e.g. 'Socially Speaking' activities, LDA.
<p>5. Comparing items: making and explaining links between things.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semantic Links Levels 1 and 4. Possibly do these sorts of categorisation games with objects before using pictures. • Odd One Out games • 'Guess Who' Game
<p>6. Justifying your prediction: Learning to answer Why? questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why-because worksheets, Black Sheep Press • Verbal Reasoning Activities, Great Ideas for Teaching Inc. (Winslow Press) • What's Wrong pictures e.g. Colorcards
<p>7. Problem solving: Thinking about different options and how they may change an outcome. Trying out different options and deciding which one is most sensible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think it-Say it, Communication Skill Builders (available through Winslow Press) • What would you do?, LDA • Silly or Sensible game • What's Wrong pictures e.g. Colorcards
<p>8. Inferencing: Learning to answer How? questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking and Thinking, Learning Materials Ltd. Books 1-3 • Reading for Meaning, Learning Materials Ltd. Books 1-4 sections on Orientation and Deduction especially useful • Reading and Thinking, Learning Materials Ltd. Books 1-5 (a reading comprehension programme. Earlier levels have multiple choice answers) • Picture Q's Books 3 & 4, Learning Materials Ltd.