

Teacher talk *Brush Your Teeth!*

Read about evidence-based theories that underpin best teaching practices. By learning more about the theory behind teaching strategies you will develop a deeper understanding of what 'works best' for the learners in your classroom.

Teacher talk will help you to understand the pedagogic practices surrounding the '[Big Six](#)' focus areas. You will discover a range of instructional strategies that integrate these core elements of reading development.

Inclusive teaching and learning opportunities that build on the Big Six as well as students' needs, strengths and interests are vital for building student capacity in learning English. This can be a complex and challenging task. Teacher talk offers instructional strategies aimed at scaffolding the learning of a diverse range of students, including English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) students and students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Try these strategies as you share *Brush Your Teeth!* with your class, and use them in other aspects of your reading program. Discuss with your colleagues the instructional practices that resonate with you, and those that have been effective in your classroom.

Scaffolding literacy development through singing

Brush Your Teeth! can be sung to the tune of 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star'. Singing can be used as a means of engaging students and as an instructional strategy for literacy development (Bintz, 2010). As outlined by Bintz, singing as an instructional strategy:

- engages
- connects reading and writing
- supports phonics and phonemic awareness
- assists rhyme recognition
- contributes to word recognition
- aids memorisation of phrases
- assists with recall of sentences.

Bintz also notes that research has demonstrated how repeated singings and readings help develop reading fluency. Cecil (2011) recognises that rhyme, rhythm and repetition of song through repeated encounters motivate young children and provides opportunities for enjoyable exposure to language, high-frequency words and phonics.

Use singing as an instructional strategy to support the literacy development of students. Over a few weeks use the following suggested procedures with the jingle *Brush Your Teeth!*

- Write the lyrics on a paper chart - read the words aloud as you write.
- Discuss the message of the text - the jingle is a persuasive text (see [Teaching and learning sequence](#) for more information).

- Talk about germs and decay using images or videos to support understanding.
- Sing *Brush Your Teeth!* to the tune of 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star', and point to the words as you sing.
- Have students sing along with you, pointing to the words as you sing together.
- Write the lyrics on cardboard strips (each line on a separate card), and hold the cardboard strips up as you sing along.
- Use echo reading or singing phrase by phrase as further support to aid recall.
- Add actions, motions or drama when reading or singing the jingle.

Plan for opportunities to repeat some or all of the above techniques as required for your students.

Sequencing to support comprehension

Sequencing activities will help your students to make meaning from the jingle *Brush your Teeth!* Sequencing activities will also allow them to practise phrase and sentence reading and word recognition.

Initial comprehension of the jingle can be explored through sequencing the steps involved in brushing your teeth. Understanding the literary structure of a procedural text and key vocabulary allows readers to unpack the features and purpose of the text (Hennessy, 2021).

In a small group, use the following steps to help students sequence the information from *Brush Your Teeth!* These steps will also contribute to memorisation of phrases, recall of sentences and aid word recognition.

1. Revisit *Brush Your Teeth!* through a read-aloud/shared reading/singalong.
2. Record the phrases/lyrics on strips of cardboard, reading the words as you write.
3. Mix up the six phrases recorded on the cardboard strips.
4. Through the [Think aloud](#) process, explain to students that you will be sequencing the phrases from the jingle in order. Don't forget to explain that sequencing is an important way to help them understand the text.
5. Rebuild the jingle using the phrases, and explain the punctuation symbols (comma and full stop).
6. As you rebuild, pause and talk about the meaning of the phrases.
7. Add images or drawings to the sequence of phrases to further scaffold your students' understanding.
8. As you sequence, encourage students to make connections to the phrases, and provide time for them to share their personal experiences.
9. Repeat the rebuild of the jingle without discussion - read aloud/sing the text only.
10. Select student volunteers to rebuild the jingle.

Students can then undertake an independent sequencing activity.

1. Provide each student with a copy of the phrases on small strips of paper.
2. Students paste the phrases back in order and illustrate the jingle.
3. Students read or sing their reconstructed jingle to a friend.

Vocabulary development and word recognition

One way to develop vocabulary understanding is to use a **picture word wall** as a basis for intentional teaching and learning of new words. Promoting word consciousness with routine investigation and ongoing review of words through picture word walls is an engaging and effective literacy practice (Gallagher & Anderson, 2016).

Use the word wall strategy with selected words from *Brush Your Teeth!* Follow these steps to help students tune into new words, consolidate their word knowledge and aid their word recognition.

1. Select the words 'brush', 'teeth', 'day', 'morning', 'night', 'germs', 'decay', 'healthy', 'strong' and 'white'.
2. Prepare a card for each word that includes the word and an image that illustrates its meaning.
3. During a read-aloud of the jingle, pause when these words are encountered to share and discuss the card, word meaning and image.
4. Model through the [Think aloud](#) process to demonstrate how important it is to notice, understand and record new and interesting words.
5. Display these words on a wall to create a word wall.
6. Revisit the word wall for consolidation of learning.
7. Provide a copy of these words for students to find images of, or draw illustrations that represent the meaning of the words.
8. Have students create their own mini word wall by pasting these words with illustrations on a sheet of A3 paper.
9. In pairs or small groups invite students to share their mini word walls by reading selected words and telling others about their meaning.

Australian Curriculum links

Foundation: [AC9EFLA03](#), [AC9EFLA07](#), [AC9EFLA08](#), [AC9EFLE02](#), [AC9EFLY02](#)

Year 1: [AC9E1LA03](#), [AC9E1LE02](#), [AC9E1LE04](#), [AC9E1LY05](#)

Year 2: [AC9E2LA03](#), [AC9E2LE04](#), [AC9E2LY05](#)

Rhyming words - developing phonological and orthographical knowledge

Use the jingle *Brush Your Teeth!* to focus students on listening for rhyme. Use the opportunity to explore letter-sound patterns by looking at the same or different ways sounds can be represented with graphemes or written letters.

Follow these steps for students who require further support after you have enjoyed singing the jingle and have talked about the meaning of this persuasive text.

These steps have been adapted from the Literacy Teaching Toolkit, [Lesson 3: Rhyming words](#).

1. Explain to students that rhyme is when we hear the same sound at the end of words.
2. Provide examples of rhyming words for students to listen to. Use internet resources to support this task. Support the concept of rhyme by also highlighting examples of words that do not rhyme.

3. After students have had multiple opportunities to listen to rhyming words, select a word and ask students to give a rhyming word.
4. Read aloud or sing *Brush your Teeth!*
5. Read aloud the first two lines, *Brush your teeth two times a day, Keep germs and decay away* and ask students to close their eyes and use their ears to listen for words that rhyme.
6. Make a list of the rhyming words (day/decay/away).
7. Have students brainstorm other words that rhyme with 'day', and add these to the list. Ask: *What do you notice about the spelling patterns? Do the words have the same/different spelling pattern?*
8. Read the list of rhyming words together as a whole group.
9. As students come across other words that rhyme with 'day', add these words to the list.
10. Repeat steps 6 to 9 using the next line, *In the morning and at night, keeps teeth healthy, strong and white*. Note that 'night' and 'white' end with same sound but have a different spelling pattern (rime).

To expose students to further rhyming words have them listen to and join in saying other short rhymes.

For further information on rhyming, view [this video](#).

Australian Curriculum links

Foundation: [AC9EFLY09](#), [AC9EFLY13](#)

Year 1: [AC9E1LY12](#)

Year 2: [AC9E2LA03](#)

References

Bintz, W. P. (2010). Singing across the curriculum. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(8), 683–686.

Cecil, N. L. (2011). *Striking a balance: A comprehensive approach to early literacy (4th ed.)*. Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway.

Gallagher, M. A. and Anderson, B. E. (2016). Get all 'jazzed up' for vocabulary instruction: Strategies that engage. *The Reading Teacher*, 70(3), 273–282.

Hennessy, N. (2021). *The reading comprehension blueprint*. Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.



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