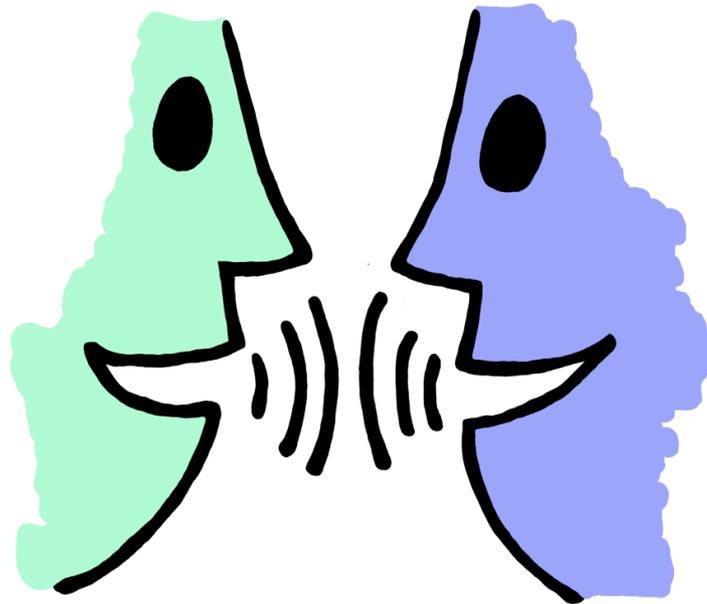


# Afasic CYMRU

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Charity No. 1045617

Helping your secondary age child  
to explain and tell stories



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## Explaining and telling stories

It may surprise you to know that the skills needed to listen, understand and talk that typically emerge during early childhood continue to refine and develop into adolescence during secondary school years.

Being able to explain more complex ideas and tell long and more complex narratives are key areas of development throughout adolescence.

Supporting a child or young person to use longer sentences, explain complex ideas and build more complex stories helps with:

- ✓ Joining in conversations and discussions
- ✓ Answering more complex questions
- ✓ Working in a team
- ✓ Developing thinking and learning
- ✓ Explaining feelings and emotions
- ✓ Making friends and developing relationships
- ✓ Solving problems and resolving conflict

If you are concerned about your child's listening, understanding and/or talking, whatever their age, seek advice from a qualified speech and language therapist.

Read this leaflet for general ideas of how you can help your child to develop their talking to explain and tell stories. Please adapt suggestions to take account of your child's age and stage of development.

## Building longer sentences, explaining and telling stories

The ability to speak in longer sentences, explain more complex ideas and tell detailed stories develops throughout adolescence.

- i. **Longer sentences**  
Developing grammar (as well as vocabulary) helps your child to use longer and more complex sentences. 'Joining words' are special words that can be used to lengthen sentences and connect ideas when speaking and writing. Examples of 'joining words' include: because, so, also, before, even though, however, provided that.
- ii. **Explaining**  
The use of joining words also helps with explaining, for example, the rules of a game, or the solution to a problem or retelling a complex sequence of events. The ability to convey clear and detailed explanations continues to develop as grammatical skills mature.
- iii. **Stories**  
Through adolescence your child will typically develop their ability to tell longer, well-planned, and more detailed stories whilst ensuring that the listener follows what is being said.



## How you can help

- a. Ask your child what they think would help with explaining and telling stories. Encourage your child to tell you when they are finding it difficult to explain something.
- b. The listening environment at home will help your child with their talking. Reduce background noise as this makes it easier to listen and talk.
- c. Create opportunities for conversations such as during a walk, in the car, cooking together. Pause to let them start the conversation! Avoid asking lots of questions, one after another. Speak in a slightly slower way and allow your child 5-10 seconds to take in what you say.
- d. Encourage your child to take their time to think about what they want to say.
- e. Encourage your child to think of another way of saying something or showing what they mean. Visual supports such as mime, drawing, images, photos and objects can all help.
- f. Encourage your child to plan what to say, especially if it is in preparation for speaking in a group.
- g. Explain the specific meanings of joining words and model how to use them in longer sentences when you talk and/or read together. Words like 'because', 'until', 'if' are abstract words that need practise.
- h. Share a story of your day together. You take the first turn and model how to retell a couple of events from your day. Use words like 'first' and 'next' to make the sequence very clear. Then ask your child about something from their day.
- i. Watch a favourite Youtube clip or TV programme together then review it, remembering what happened first, what happened next, your favourite moments and what happened in the end.
- j. Ask your child to teach you/explain how to do something that is fun or helps to solve a problem eg: using an App, playing a game, You can record their ideas on a phone or write down their instructions to help with checking back.
- k. Use a visual plan to help structure the telling of a story. There are a number of different ways of doing this. Search online for images for 'narrative story planner' to find one that may help.
- l. If you want to check how the skills for talking and communicating gradually progress, follow this link to view a 'What's typical at secondary?' poster.  
<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/sites/talkingpoint.org.uk/files/Secondary%20Milestone%20Poster%20-%20Final.pdf>