

TALKING THE TALK

As has already been mentioned, when children talk and describe during science-related activities, they are actively thinking and learning to problem solve. We can facilitate this by questioning and introducing new vocabulary.

1. Questioning: Asking the right questions will encourage a child to elaborate. Any question that requires only a 'yes' or 'no' response or has only one 'correct' answer is closed. Open-ended questions are the key to good science talk and will vary according to the age of the children you are working with.



Examples of Open-Ended Questions

Question Type	Examples
Contextualising questions (Purpose: finding out, making connections, authenticating)	Who else has one of these? Have you seen this before? Where have you seen it? When would you use this? What does it remind you of? Can you tell me about it?
Observing questions (Purpose: describing, attention-focussing)	Can you tell me about it? What can you see? What does it feel like? Does it make a noise? What is strange about it? What does it do?
Compare and contrast questions (Purpose: observing, categorising)	Which ones are the same? How do you know? What is the same about them? What is different? Can you show me the difference? How can we sort them out?
Concrete action questions (Purpose: counting, measurement)	How many? Do they weigh the same? Is it bigger, heavier, longer? How long?
Predicting questions (Purpose: exploring, experimenting)	What do you think will happen if ...? How long will it take to ...? How far will we have to go? How much will fit?
Problem-solving questions (Purpose: enquiring, thinking)	How else could you ...? What's a different way we could try? How can we help each other? How would you fix it?
Thinking questions (Purpose: explaining, reflecting, reasoning)	Why did you do it that why? What do you think about...? Why do you think that? What else would you like to know about? How did it change? What have you discovered? Have you changed your mind about this?