

Story Talk

Support early language development and communication



Story Talk is an online subscription delivering resources and training plus wordless picture books to support rich adult-child interactions.



Support early language development and communication with Story Talk – a new research-informed, evidence-based programme

The Story Talk Programme

The **Story Talk** subscription provides the resources and training required to implement the programme in full. It includes guidance and support for leadership, class teachers and other staff members teaching the programme alongside strategies for family engagement. Find out more on p.4.

Twelve wordless picture books

Lively wordless picture books are at the heart of the **Story Talk** programme and build vocabulary, improve language and communication and increase social and emotional wellbeing through quality interactions and rich child-led book talk. Find out more on p.6.

Story Talk can support children in EYFS and KS1 who may:

- be below expected levels for communication and language
- have SEND
- find it hard to engage/concentrate with whole-class storytime
- have potentially missed out on storytime at home
- don't choose to look at books
- struggle to access adult-led learning
- are new to speaking English
- have limited vocabulary
- lack confidence, especially in groups.



"The introduction of **Story Talk** at Grange Primary School has been an extremely positive experience. Children love choosing their favourite stories to share with an adult and sometimes one or two friends. They especially enjoy being "the boss of the book" and deciding where the story goes.

Teachers have found the approach equally rewarding, as **Story Talk** meets each child exactly where they are. The flexibility of using one book in many different ways is incredibly powerful! We have found that each time the book is opened, whether with a new child or one revisiting it, the story unfolds differently. We've also seen the power of repetition, with many children choosing to return to the same story. They retain vocabulary from previous sessions and build on it quickly and confidently."

AMANDA MATHESON, GRANGE SCHOOL HEADTEACHER



Interaction strategies and language support

Story Talk has high-quality, positive interaction between an adult and a child at the heart of the programme.

Support for enabling this is included within every **Story Talk** book, and videos that explain the Interaction strategies in more detail are provided as part of the **Story Talk** subscription.



Boss of the book:

The first principle of *Story Talk* is that the child is in charge. They choose the book, dictate the pace and turn the pages.



Point and name:

Develop language as you read together by encouraging the pointing and naming of nouns and verbs.



Joint attention:

Tune in to what the child is looking at in the book, so that you can talk about it together.



Serve and return:

Extend children's language by affirming and repeating what they have said, adding an emotion or adjective as appropriate using correct grammar, and describing where the action is happening.



Bring it alive:

Creative excitement and tension using your voice as you talk, create sound effects and sing nursery rhymes.



Link to the child's experience:

Use "I wonder..." and "That reminds me..." to start conversations about things the child has experienced in class or at home.

Meet the programme creator

Hi, I'm Charlotte Raby. I am a teacher, author and early reading and inclusion specialist who co-wrote the *DfE Reading Ambition for All* programme. I was the programme developer for Little Wandle and have worked for the past thirty years with schools, publishers and the DfE to ensure that children regardless of their starting points are given access to reading.



I have wanted to develop **Story Talk** for a long time. I believe that reading begins with language, and a love of reading can only grow when language, reading skills, and reading for pleasure are all equally attended to.

Story Talk gives schools a joyful, positive way to support children develop language, communication and self-esteem using evidence-based effective strategies. I am a passionate advocate for teaching both the skills of reading and the joy of reading to all children and believe that every child can become a reader.



Scan the QR code or visit collins.co.uk/StoryTalk to view video explanations of the interaction strategies.

The Story Talk Programme

The Story Talk programme is available as a subscription that provides comprehensive training for implementation and assessment, as well as tools for leadership, practitioners and for family engagement.

The Story Talk programme includes:

- Training modules section, including walkthroughs of sessions and 'what to do if' troubleshooting for each strategy
- Pupil assessments and assessment guidance
- Planning and resources for 1-1 and group sessions for every book
- **Story Talk** sessions-in-action videos, videos to explain the Interaction strategies, and walk-through videos for each **Story Talk** book
- Timetabling and implementation guidance
- Research and evidence-based information
- Ongoing access to early language and reading webinars
- Resources for family engagement, including a ready-to-use workshop presentation
- Resources for school leadership, including how to use **Story Talk** to achieve your school improvement plans and school readiness targets

Training videos from programme creator, Charlotte Raby, explain the Story Talk pedagogy and how to support pupils to develop their language and communication skills



Story Talk initial session: baseline (example)

	Look out for:	Notes	Next steps
Interest in books	• book choice ✓ • interactions with the cover ✓ • comments about the book ✓ • reference to other books • anxiety ✓ • disinterest	Choose three books: The Big Bus and Us, The Wrong Socks and The Boy and the Ball Looked at cover and said 'I want this' Anxiety (see response to shared attention)	
Book behaviours	• interest in the cover ✓ • book orientation ✓ • page turning ✓ • pointing or touching the pages ✓ • eye gaze across the page ✓ • awareness of story/characters	Held the final book and took charge Some pages interested them for longer	Work on retelling and identifying characters
Concentration	• time spent choosing/browsing ✓ • ability to settle without support ✓ • needing encouragement to settle • time spent on specific pages ✓ • speed of session • returning to the book after an interaction • need for a quiet space/happy with noise ✓	Returned to the box to choose new books, enjoyed looking at covers Class teacher says the child removes herself in whole-class sessions	Quiet place for sessions Focus on building confidence: 1st and then consider sessions with another child and then Story Talk Book Club

Pupil assessments

Guidance for leadership, teachers and other staff on how to use the programme

Everything you need to know to implement Story Talk in your setting

Why should you use Story Talk?

In 2023, more than a quarter (187,000) five-year-olds did not meet the expected levels to meet the Early Learning Goals for communication, language, and literacy. Research suggests that over 106,000 of this group could have achieved these levels if they had additional support.^[1] A disproportionate amount of this cohort comes from disadvantaged communities.

There is clear evidence of the impact if targeted support is not provided to children in EYFS:

- 15% of pupils with identified speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 compared with 61% of all pupils.^[2]
- 81% of children with emotional and behavioural disorders have unidentified SLCN^[2]
- Children with vocabulary difficulties at age 5 are three times more likely to have mental health problems in adulthood and twice as likely to be unemployed when they reach adulthood.^[3]
- Children from socially disadvantaged families are more than twice as likely to be identified with a SLCN.^[4]

Research tells us that approaches which support children's early language and communication are central to improving their life-chances.

'Children who are better communicators at age five go on to become better readers, get better exam results at age 16, and are more likely to gain higher-paid employment as adults'^[5]. As the EEF's Preparing for Literacy guidance report states, 'language provides the foundation of thinking and learning and should be prioritised.'

Story Talk can be used alongside any phonics programme and is not part of a reading programme.

Who is it for?

Story Talk has been created and trialled in schools to support specific cohorts of children in EYFS and Key Stage 1. It is first and foremost a programme to develop language and social communication for children who are not at age-related language levels.

It has also been very successful for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, and children who are new to speaking English or speak English as an additional language (EAL) and are not confident in speaking.

It can be used flexibly to support children through one-to-one or group sessions. Story Talk has been developed with inclusion at its heart; it is accessible by design and can support a wide range of children who may have differing needs.

Everything you need to know to implement Story Talk in your setting

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Resources for family engagement



Why book sharing matters

We'd all like our children to be confident and able to tell us what they want and need. A child's early language experiences have a powerful impact on their emotional and academic wellbeing.

Evidence has grown about the importance of children's regulation and communication in their development. Research has identified the positive impact of shared reading in developing self-regulation and language.

Book sharing has a wide, long-term impact:

- Children who read, or are read to, regularly tend to have better wellbeing, lower levels of emotional problems, and improved resilience and self-esteem. (Batinin et al, 2020)
- Book sharing provides the opportunity for calm through escapism, imagination and emotional regulation. In many ways reading can act as a protective factor against the adversity some children experience. (Rix et al, 2017)



Training videos to help users see the Story Talk strategies in practice

Pupil record sheet: strategies 1-3

Child's name:	Book title and date	Box of the book:	Point and name:	Enjoyment	Notes
		interactions with the book	words and phrases		

Pupil record sheet: strategies 1-3

1



Collins
hub

1-year subscription to Story Talk
978-0-00-879407-1
£130.00

Resources for the **Story Talk** programme are accessed on the Collins Hub.

Find out more and request a free trial at
collinshub.co.uk



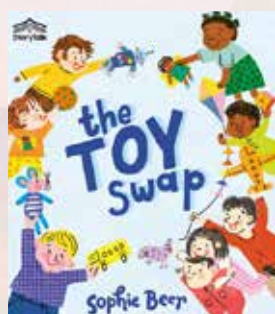
Discover the books

Twelve wordless large format picture books created for children in nursery, Reception and KS1 to improve children's early language and facilitate positive interactions between adults and children.

Authentic life experiences are represented to engage all children and help spark conversation and story telling.



EYFS



The Toy Swap

Follow four families as they get ready to go to the park for a toy swap!

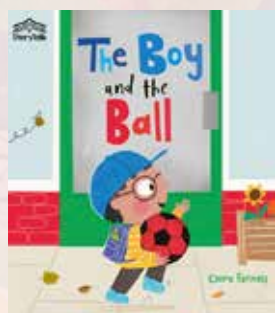
978-0-00-879394-4
£7.99



A Big Day In

Spend the day with two friends as they enjoy a playdate together.

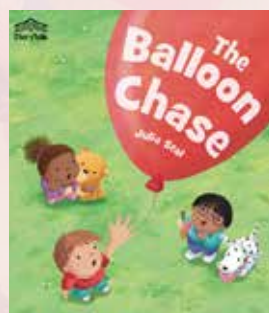
978-0-00-879395-1
£7.99



The Boy and the Ball

Leo and his mum walk into town to buy him a new football. But then he gets distracted and loses the ball. Will he ever get it back?

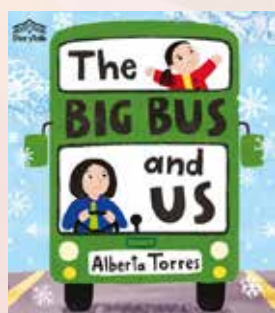
978-0-00-879396-8
£7.99



The Balloon Chase

Join Jack and his friends at a summer fair as he enjoys choosing a new balloon — and then he loses it! Will he ever get it back?

978-0-00-879397-5
£7.99



The Big Bus and Us

Follow Neve and her dad as they catch the bus together. Where will they end up?

978-0-00-879398-2
£7.99



The Wrong Socks

Today isn't going well for Jonah, but will he be able to turn it around before the end of the day?

978-0-00-879399-9
£7.99



Pages from *The Boy and the Ball*



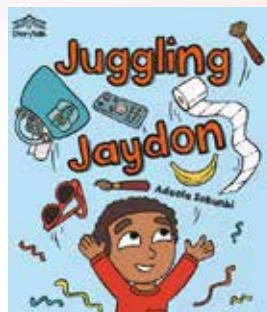


Charlie and Robocat

Charlie and Maya are enjoying playing with a new toy together — until the toy is accidentally broken. Will they be able to fix the toy and their friendship?

978-0-00-879400-2

£7.99

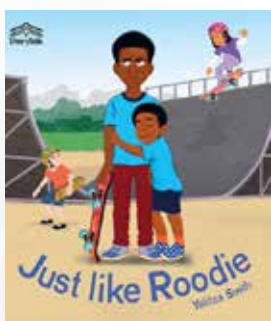


Juggling Jaydon

Jaydon and his dad are excited to see a juggling performer when they're out in town, and Jaydon is inspired. But it turns out juggling is more difficult than he realised!

978-0-00-879401-9

£7.99



Just Like Roodie

Robert is desperate to be as good at skateboarding as Roodie, but Roodie isn't keen on teaching his little brother. Is there anything that will persuade him?

978-0-00-879403-3

£7.99

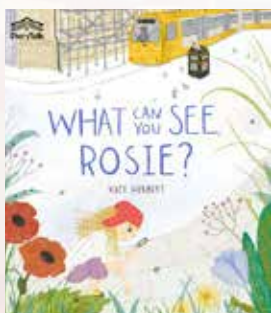


What a Performance!

Amelia and Arlo are excited — there's going to be a school talent show and they will be performing their favourite magic tricks! But one trick keeps going wrong in rehearsals. Will it go well in the performance?

978-0-00-879404-0

£7.99



What Can You See, Rosie?

Rosie is always on the lookout for animals wherever she goes but never seems to see any. When she agrees to help Grandad with his roof garden, she starts to see what she's been missing this whole time.

978-0-00-879405-7

£7.99



Farid's First Day

Farid and his family have just moved to a new town, and today is his first day at school. Will he fit in and make a new friend?

978-0-00-879406-4

£7.99



Pages from Farid's First Day

"Using **Story Talk** with my Nursery class has been an extremely positive experience. The carefully chosen texts immediately engaged the children and provided rich opportunities for discussion, vocabulary development and making connections. The strategies are practical and easy to embed into everyday teaching, and I noticed a real improvement in pupils' confidence. **Story Talk** has become a valuable part of our Early Years provision, and I would highly recommend it to other teachers looking to strengthen oracy and a love for books in a meaningful, enjoyable way."

CHRISTINE LOVETT, ALEXANDRA PRIMARY SCHOOL HOUNSLOW, ASSISTANT HEAD



Order form

Our sales consultants and customer services teams would be delighted to talk to you about Story Talk resources. Phone or email us on the details below to arrange a school visit, request a demonstration, view sample resources or have a bespoke quotation tailored to the needs of your school.

Save 30% on Story Talk

Order a 1-year subscription to the Story Talk programme and a minimum of 1 copy of each of the 12 wordless picture books and save 30% on the cost of your order.

Implement the Story Talk programme in your school for just:

- 1 full set of books + 1-year subscription = £160 + VAT
- 2 full sets of books + 1-year subscription = £225 + VAT
- 3 full sets of books + 1-year subscription = £295 + VAT

Contact your local representative or customer services to order. Offer valid until 31st July 2026.

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Story Talk				
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A Big Day In	978-0-00-879395-1	£7.99		
The Boy and the Ball	978-0-00-879396-8	£7.99		
The Balloon Chase	978-0-00-879397-5	£7.99		
The Big Bus and Us	978-0-00-879398-2	£7.99		
The Wrong Socks	978-0-00-879399-9	£7.99		
Charlie and Robocat	978-0-00-879400-2	£7.99		
Juggling Jaydon	978-0-00-879401-9	£7.99		
Just Like Roodie	978-0-00-879403-3	£7.99		
What a Performance	978-0-00-879404-0	£7.99		
What Can You See, Rosie?	978-0-00-879405-7	£7.99		
Farid's First Day	978-0-00-879406-4	£7.99		
1-year subscription to the Story Talk programme on the Collins Hub Talk to your local consultant to order	978-0-00-879407-1	£130.00		

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Story Talk has been developed by the team behind Collins Big Cat, the leading reading programme for primary schools.



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