

Pupil Pursuit Proforma A: Opportunities for Academic Language Development

Observation details

Observer's name: **Alice Bingham**

Pupil's name: **Ahmad Sayyid**

Subject: **History**

Year: **4**

English proficiency level (see below): **A**

Instructions

Fill in the table below using the provided codes to record your observations within timed intervals. See **Proforma Sample A** for an example. You can use the box on the next page to record any further comments.

English proficiency levels: A: New to English; B: Early acquisition; C: Developing competence; D: Competent; E: Fluent. To find out more about assessing proficiency in English, see: bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-assessment-framework

Time	Listening		Speaking		Reading/Viewing	Writing	Off task/Unable	
	Social	Academic	Social	Academic				
Minute 1–5	S	T						
Minute 6–10	S	S, T	WP - S		CR - instructions		UA - R	
Minute 11–15						CW - neighbour's writing	UA - W	
Minute 16–20		T			HL - bilingual dictionary			
Minute 21–25		S, T					UA - L	
Minute 26–30								
Codes	T listening to teacher S listening to student HL home language		WP word/phrase CS complete sentence ED extended discourse HL home language T speaking to teacher S speaking to student		CR choral reading PR partner reading GR group reading HL home language I independent		CW copy writing SF sentence frame HL home language I independent	
							UA: unable to comprehend, speak, read, or write [please specify L, S, R or W] without additional support OT: off task during listening, speaking, reading, or writing [please specify: L, S, R or W]	

Record any further comments on observed activities and interactions below:

The teacher introduced an independent science writing task linked to the lesson content. Instructions were displayed and read aloud to the class. Ahmad looked at the instructions on the board and in his book but did not join in with the oral reading. No additional explanation, modelling, or visual support was provided to check his understanding of the task.

Ahmad was seated next to an assigned English-speaking buddy. The buddy showed Ahmad her written response and told him to copy it. Ahmad responded verbally with “yes.” There was no structured talk built into the task, and pupils worked silently.

Ahmad copied the opening part of his buddy’s response. After this, he paused and did not continue writing. He used a bilingual dictionary to look up several science-related words but did not add further content to his work. He remained seated and on task but did not produce additional written language.

Towards the end of the lesson, two pupils shared their written responses with the class. The teacher repeated and expanded on these responses using scientific vocabulary before moving on to the next activity. Ahmad listened but was not invited to contribute orally.

Findings and recommendations:

Findings –

During this science lesson, Ahmad had limited opportunities to access or produce academic language in English. Instructions for the writing task were not adapted or clarified to support his level of English proficiency, and there were no opportunities for oral rehearsal or discussion prior to writing. Although seated with a buddy, support was limited to copying written work, which did not support comprehension or independent language use. Ahmad attempted to use a bilingual dictionary but was unable to use this to engage meaningfully with the task. His home language was not acknowledged or used as a learning resource, and the task expectations were not adjusted for a pupil working at an early stage of English acquisition.

Recommendations –

- a) Develop and implement a clear school-wide approach that recognises pupils’ home languages as a resource for learning, including guidance on when and how they can be used in lessons.
- b) Provide targeted CPD for teaching staff focused on supporting pupils at early stages of English acquisition, with particular emphasis on adapting instructions, modelling academic language, and building in opportunities for oral rehearsal.

- c) Introduce short, practical training for student buddies so they can support language development more effectively (e.g. explaining tasks, using visuals, encouraging talk rather than copying).
- d) Review buddy systems regularly to ensure they support both access to learning and wider peer interaction; consider pairing pupils with both English-speaking and shared-language peers where possible.
- e) Build structured opportunities into lessons for newly arrived pupils to contribute using talk, visuals, or first language support, helping them develop confidence and a sense of belonging while accessing curriculum content.