

Teachers' Notes

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 Using LinguaSign in the Classroom
 LinguaSign and the KS2 Framework for Languages

LinguaSign is an immersive approach to language teaching, extending pupils' spoken confidence in a second language. LinguaSign brings native speakers of the new language directly into the classroom in the form of exciting 3D avatar characters, speaking and signing to reinforce meaning. The whole class can join in their adventures, taking turns to echo the avatars' speech and signs.

Immersive Learning

Traditional classroom methods for teaching the speaking and listening skills of a new language often begin with individual sounds and words which are then combined into phrases and sentences to develop short role plays. This approach extends pupils' abilities to hold simple conversations and in particular supports the non-specialist teacher.

Number of Repetitions

It is recommended that classes revisit the same LinguaSign story 6-10 times. For each repetition, the whole class will watch, listen and take turns to echo the native speaker voices and gestures of the avatars. With frequent opportunities to 'act out' the same story, pupils will gradually absorb and learn the words and phrases in the adventures, effortlessly imitating and eventually anticipating the avatar voices and expressions. Pupils will enhance their speaking and listening skills in the new language and develop greater confidence, accuracy and understanding.

A Completely New Language?

LinguaSign may be used as an introduction to speaking and listening in a completely new language. Each story can be used over a period of several weeks and teachers may choose to supplement this language acquisition with cultural information about the language's country or countries, perhaps with a class visit from a native speaker - who may sing a traditional song, read a story, lead a cookery activity etc.

Supplementing other Teaching Resources?

LinguaSign may also be used to supplement other resources or schemes of work in order to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills so that they begin to speak with a more confident and fluent 'voice'.



Supporting English

LinguaSign has been successfully trialled with both EAL and Special Needs pupils to extend speaking and listening skills in English.

Covering the KS2 Framework's Oracy and Language Learning Strategy Strands

LinguaSign has not been designed to cover all 5 KS2 framework strands. Its main purpose is to support Oracy skills and Language Learning Strategies up to and including Y6. *Please see KS2 framework section on page 6 and 7.*

The Languages Ladder and the Common European Framework

LinguaSign will support pupils to work towards Breakthrough Grade 3 Oracy, NC level 3 or the Common European Framework level A1 in Speaking and Understanding.

A Restricted and Relevant Vocabulary

The LinguaSign stories have been scripted to contain a restricted vocabulary of about 50 new words per story, reflecting the natural, informal speech of native speaker children (8-10 yrs) including questions and answers, exclamations and giving opinions. *For story scripts, please visit the LinguaSign website.*

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Teachers' Notes

The importance of gesture

Language teachers are often renowned for their extravagant hand gestures as they try to explain their meaning without translation! Scientific research now shows that as pupils learn a new language, their use of gesture will lay down strong memory traces helping to recall new words and phrases. LinguaSign trials showed that groups not using gestures learnt less effectively.

Marion Tellier 2008: gestures significantly influence the memorisation of L2 in young children..., leaving a richer trace in memory.

Introducing Deaf Signing

A unique aspect of LinguaSign is that the gestures suggested are closely inspired by existing Deaf-Sign language. The signs used are predominately iconic and universal (the meaning is clear from the gesture) and are copies or close approximations to Dutch and British Deaf Sign Language (LinguaSign was originally funded through a EU programme involving UK and Dutch partners).

Combining signing with second language learning, pupils will be able to discuss wider aspects of language learning and communication, covering many of the KS2 Framework's suggestions for Language Learning Strategies.

Teachers may choose to extend this aspect of LinguaSign through further investigation of deaf sign language involving members of the school or wider community.



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Class Discussion Activities

The following activities are suggested for small group or whole class discussion to encourage KS2 pupils to reflect on their language learning (LLS) and introduce the four key ideas underlying LinguaSign. Teachers of KS1 pupils may wish to select the discussions and activities most suitable for a younger age range.

1: Immersive learning

Key idea: We learn our first language in an immersive way - by hearing words in context and gradually learning their meaning.

Class discussion

Learning by immersion means no one is actually teaching you something, you just hear it so often, you learn it anyway. Can pupils think of ways they have learnt new words or phrases in English without actually being taught them? Picture clues on a whiteboard could be used to trigger responses such as:

Picture of a toddler: we learn to speak our first language through listening to family members.

A well known picture book: children often know a favourite story by heart because it has been read to them many times.

The cover of a well known song CD: we often know the words to popular songs just because we have heard and sung along to them so many times. **EAL pupils or pupils who have lived abroad may introduce their experiences of immersive language learning.

Further discussion

What do these experiences tell pupils about effective ways to learn a new language?

2. The importance of frequent practice

Key idea: In order to imitate a natural 'immersive' experience of language learning, pupils need to have opportunities to encounter and practise the same language many times.

Class discussion

Ask pupils to think of a skill they, or a friend, or a famous person have acquired through frequent practice. Picture clues on a whiteboard could be used to trigger responses such as:

A famous musician: playing a musical instrument well requires many hours of practice.

A famous sportsman / woman: playing a sport well requires repeated practice of key skills.

A famous racing driver: driving a car becomes almost automatic the more you practice.

Further discussion

What do these experiences of practice tell pupils about effective ways to learn a new language?

3. Using gestures to support speaking and understanding

Key idea: Gestures are a form of language in their own right. Scientific research is showing that if

you gesture a new word as you learn it, you will remember it better!

Class discussion

Ask pupils to share or research experiences of using gestures and signing in a variety of activities. Picture clues on a whiteboard could be used to trigger responses such as:

A person on holiday abroad: pupils may have their own experiences of when signing helps when you don't know the words of a new language.

A ballet dancer/ sub aqua diver/ referee/ mime artist: pupils may already know of 'silent' activities such as these where signs are often used to communicate key ideas.

**Some pupils may have direct knowledge of deaf signing (or baby signing).

Further discussion and research

- Is it useful to know about deaf signing?
- In what ways is deaf signing like a real language and how might it differ? (Older pupils).
- Do pupils feel that the signs they are learning help them to remember the new words?
- If pupils know about their own learning styles (VAK) they may compare who finds gestures more or less helpful.

4. Learning to hold a conversation in a new language

Key idea: You can hold a conversation with only a few words, especially if helped by gestures. It's really important to be able to ask a few basic questions. Opinion words are also particularly useful.

Class discussion

Discuss the informal language of children's play, including using contractions (*I can't, you're*), exclamations (*watch out! ouch!*) and opinion words (*really amazing! It's brilliant!*). Pupils could research how authors reflect this in children's conversations (J.K. Rowling has good examples in the early Harry Potter books).

Further discussion

- Will children speak in this informal way in other languages? (Answer: yes!)
- What might be some of the most useful questions and answers to know in a new language? (Answer: greetings, names, opinions, what you like doing...)

Using LinguaSign in the Classroom



LinguaSign

Classroom organisation

If possible show LinguaSign on a large screen using a data projector or interactive whiteboard.

- When only a smaller image is possible, (using a TV or computer monitor) it may be more suitable to use the resource with small groups.
- In both situations, the audio quality should be as clear as possible.

Choosing the story to watch

- Beginners to a new language should watch the stories in sequence 1-4, as some vocabulary from Story 1 reappears in Story 2 etc.
- Where LinguaSign is used to supplement existing learning, teachers may use stories out of order to practise specific vocabulary, similar to choosing songs or books. *For story scripts, please visit the LinguaSign website.*
- Pupils who have already been learning a language for a year or more may already be familiar with vocabulary in story 1 and will progress quickly to stories 2, 3 & 4.

Preparing to watch the story

- A whole class can either stand behind their desks or stand or sit in front of the whiteboard. *Please visit the LinguaSign website to watch a film clip of class standing.*
- All pupils need a clear view of the screen and room to move their arms and hands!
- Pupils will be reassured if you explain that no-one will be talking by themselves: this is a group activity.
- Ideally teachers should stand to the front at the side and join in, acting as role models for the class: the avatars are the 'teachers' during the story.

Putting on a 'wristband' as a symbol of moving into the world of a new language

An 'amazing' wristband is a key feature of story 1 and future stories.

- As the story begins you may wish to ask your class to put on a real, or imaginary, wristband (and put one on yourself).
- Whilst the wristband is on pupils will no longer speak their first language (L1) but will be able to speak the new language (L2) and, of course, sign.

Watching the story for the first time

Explain to the class that for each new speaking sequence:

- The avatar will speak a single word or short phrase accompanied by a sign or signs.
- The class will watch and listen.
- The avatar will then repeat the sign and MOUTH the same words.
- The class copies (or echoes) the avatar's voice in unison and also copies the signing sequence.

N.B. Some (younger) pupils may have a longer 'silent phase' than others and may copy the signing but may not repeat every word. This is a natural reaction to language learning. As long as pupils are listening and paying attention, they are acquiring language.

When the story finishes

Remove the real or imaginary wristband: now the class can talk in their first language (L1) again.

- A teacher may now ask pupils what they thought the story was about.
- Do not explicitly encourage direct translations as this would not happen in a real immersion situation.
- Remind the class that repetitions will get easier each time they watch the story.

Re-watching the story

Watch the whole story as frequently as your timetable allows (to encourage conversational fluency):

- LinguaSign trials have shown that pupils will quickly begin to sign along with the avatars even when the avatars sign for the first time.
 - This is fine and gives extra signing practice!
- Trials have also shown that, after a few 'watchings', some pupils speak along with the avatar.
 - This is a natural reaction and shows enthusiasm, and motivation to use the language.
 - If pupils are speaking along with the avatar, encourage them to speak very softly so they don't mask the avatars' voices nor distract their neighbours. They can speak more loudly when the avatar repeats and mouths.
- Each story should be watched between 6-10 times, according to your judgement.

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Using LinguaSign in the Classroom



LinguaSign

- If pupils are learning the same language using other resources they may acquire the story vocabulary more quickly.
- Younger pupils can often watch the same story many times without tiring of it. Each repetition will continue to benefit them as they are imitating native speaker voices.
- Move to a new story when the majority of the pupils are fluently repeating the majority of words and phrases.
- If possible allow pupils individual access to the story, on a smaller screen during the week, to practise the words and gestures.

Watching the shorter 'chapters'

The LinguaSign immersion methodology encourages frequent re-watching of whole stories

- If, after watching a whole story, pupils seem to have a specific difficulty with some signs or language, teachers may choose to practise a specific section or chapter that can be selected from the title menu.
- Alternatively pupils may select their favourite sections to watch again.

Daily classroom language

As teachers, don't limit your new language learning and signing to specific lessons.

- You will find the greetings, exclamations, praise words and many other expressions introduced in the stories are useful to use at any time throughout the week. *For story scripts, please visit the LinguaSign website.*
- As the children hear you actively using and signing with the new language they will be encouraged and motivated to do the same.
- Hopefully you will hear pupils running off into the playground encouraging their friends with: 'Off we go', 'Allons-y', 'We gaan!' ...and you will be tempted to say: 'Really amazing', 'Vraiment génial!', 'Echt geweldig!'

Literacy activities

Although not designed to support literacy objectives the LinguaSign story scripts can be used with older pupils once they are confident with speaking a story. *For story scripts, please visit the LinguaSign website.* Pupils could read the stories as dialogues, or copy them into cartoon speech bubbles. *Please see Framework/Languages Ladder on page 6/7.*

Assessment

The intended outcome of using LinguaSign is

to extend pupils' spoken confidence in a new language and to introduce them to deaf signing. With enough repetitions of any story pupils should develop confident speaking, listening and signing skills within the specific vocabulary of each story.

Teachers may choose to assess this growing confidence through:

- video records of whole class participation
- providing opportunities for role play activities for pupils/puppets, re-enacting part of a story
- pupils' participation in the suggested follow-up games activities.

Teachers may find it useful to assess progression in speaking and listening skills using the Languages Ladder statements. *Please see Framework/Languages Ladder on page 6/7.*

The immersive approach and links to KS1/KS2 Storytelling and Talk for Writing

LinguaSign trials showed that after about 6 class repetitions of a story, a whole class could confidently narrate and sign the complete story whilst watching the cartoon with no sound! KS1 and KS2 literacy teachers (and pupils) will recognise similarities to the Storytelling /Talk for Writing approaches: frequent repetition of the same phrases, accompanied by gestures, develops automatic recall and lays down long term memory traces.

Follow-up activities to practise specific language or signs

Intriguingly LinguaSign trials showed no difference between the language acquisition of classes who *only* watched and repeated stories compared to classes who watched and repeated stories and also used follow up activities. However teachers and pupils enjoy playing language games and are motivated to use their new language acquisition in this way.

- Teachers will wish to use their own judgement about the suitability of any activities for classes of different ages and abilities.
- Allow your class to watch a story at least 3 times before using the follow up activities so pupils develop a good familiarity with the language and signs.
- Pupils may find that the games they play in class can also be played in the playground... in the new language!
- Some games may work as warm-up/cool down activities for PE lessons.
- Favourite games can be adapted for many words and phrases of a new language.

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Linking to the KS2 Framework for Languages



Stories 1 and 2 cover framework objectives for Y 3/4 and some of the sentence / text objectives for Y5/6			
Language Learning Strategies Learning with LinguaSign, pupils' will automatically use many Language Learning Strategies .	Knowledge about Language LinguaSign is an excellent opportunity to extend pupils Knowledge about Language.	Oracy LinguaSign has a strong emphasis on the Oracy skills of Speaking, Listening and Understanding and is designed to provide an immersive opportunity to repeat and absorb native speaker speech patterns.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - listen & repeat rhythmically/ aloud - look at speaker's face - use gesture/physical response - use context to aid understanding - play games to aid memory - record selves - use context to aid meaning - practise/take turns with friends - ask someone to clarify/repeat with gesture - compare new language to English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify specific sounds, phonemes, words - imitate pronunciation - hear main word classes - recognise and use question forms recognise and use negatives - engage in turn taking - link sounds to meanings - recognise categories of words eg colours - interpret non-verbal communication 	Y3 O3. 1 Listen and respond to simple stories O3. 2 Recognise and respond: sound patterns, words, rhymes. O3. 3 Perform simple communicative tasks (words/phrases) O3. 4 Listen attentively, understand instructions, everyday language and praise (physical response, mime, gesture)	
		Y4 O4. 1 Memorise and present a short spoken text O4. 2 Listen for specific words and phrases O4. 3 Listen for sounds, rhyme and rhythm O4. 4 Ask & answer questions: develop simple role plays	
		Stories 3 and 4 continue to cover all the above objectives as well as extending skills into Y5 and Y6 objectives	
		LLS	KAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognise 'borrowed' words - use language with friends, outside the classroom - pick out key words/tone of voice - make sensible guesses for meaning - develop learning/memorising strategies - discuss language learning - use known language in different contexts - plan/prepare/evaluate work - use repetition for clarification - use actions/rhymes to aid memory - look/listen for aural/visual clues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop accuracy in pronunciation and intonation - manipulate language by changing an element in a sentence - use repair strategies to keep a conversation going - recognise the importance of intonation - present personal information and ideas - notice and manipulate agreements - use simple language spontaneously - use knowledge of text and structure to make meaning 	O5. 1 Prepare and practise simple conversation reusing familiar structures (focus on pronunciation & intonation) O5. 2 Understand and express simple opinions (agree and disagree, understand and express likes and dislikes) O5. 3 Listen, understand more complex phrases/sentences O5. 4 Prepare a short presentation on a familiar topic	
		Y6 O6. 1 Understand main points and simple opinions in a spoken story/song/passage O6. 2 Perform to an audience O6. 3 Understand longer more complex phrases/sentences O6. 4 Use spoken language confidently to initiate and sustain conversations and to tell stories	
Literacy: using LinguaSign's 'playscripts'			
Once a class is familiar with the oral retelling of a story, LinguaSign's story scripts could be used to provide coverage of the following Literacy objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils could read sections of scripts as a mini play • Pupils could use scripts as a model for short written dialogues eg in speech bubble cartoon format L3.1/L3.2/L4.1 Recognise and read aloud some familiar words and phrases from the written form L3.3/L4.4 Experiment with the writing of simple words and phrases using a model and some words from memory L4.2/L 4.3 Follow a short familiar text, listening and reading aloud and pronouncing correctly L5.1/L6/1 Re read and understand the main points and some detail from a variety of short texts L6.3 Match sound to sentences and paragraphs (listen carefully to a model and re-constitute a sentence using text cards) L5.3.6.4 Write words, phrases and short sentences on a range of topics using a model			

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Note on IU: Intercultural Understanding; LinguaSign is NOT intended to cover IU strands as it is a generic course for many languages. Teachers may choose to develop the IU strand around the language being studied using native speakers, web links and other resources.

Linking LinguaSign to the Languages Ladder



Teachers may find it useful to assess progression in speaking and listening skills using the following graded statements.

The Languages Ladder grades 1-4 (UK)

Story 1:

Listening Grade 1: I can understand a few spoken words and phrases

Speaking Grade 1: I can say/repeat a few words and short simple phrases

Story 2:

Listening Grade 2: I can understand a range of familiar spoken phrases

Speaking Grade 2: I can answer simple questions and give basic information

Story 3:

Listening Grade 3: I can understand the main points of a short spoken story

Speaking Grade 3: I can ask and answer simple questions and talk about my interests

Story 4:

Listening Grade 4: I can understand the main points and some details from a spoken story

Speaking Grade 4: I can take part in a simple conversation and I can express my opinions

The Common European Framework level A1

Listening: I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.

Interaction: I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.

Production: I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.

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