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**English Speaking Board
(International) Ltd.**



ESB Oracy Award (Entry 1)

**My Voice and Me
(unregulated)**



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Introduction

English Speaking Board (International) Ltd. (ESB International) offers high-quality Speech and Language qualifications in the UK and internationally.

We aim to support learners to develop the oracy and English language skills they need to achieve their aspirations. ESB International has a full range of qualifications for learners of all ages and backgrounds which are designed to stretch the most able, support the least confident and realise the potential of all. Do contact ESB International via our website <https://esbuk.org/> if you wish to find out more about our qualifications and how learners can progress.

This suite of assessments is designed to be marked and administered internally by teaching staff and moderated externally by ESB International. ESB International carries out training, standardisation and moderation of all its assessors/moderators to ensure the assessment of your learners is consistent and of the highest quality.

When you choose to be a centre of ESB International and prepare your learners for our assessments, we offer you support via our website and your centre's online booking hub, along with training and guidance for all staff involved with the learning experience. We are here to support you so that your learners achieve and enjoy the experience of assessment with ESB International.

Qualification Information Page

ESB Oracy Award (Entry 1): My Voice and Me is an unregulated qualification, which promotes oracy and is designed to develop learners' speaking, reading aloud, listening and responding skills.

The qualification can build learners' confidence and help them to use their voice effectively.

Qualification Content:

- Plan and give a 1-minute talk.
- Join in a range of collaborative speaking and listening tasks
- Recite/retell/read a story, poem or nursery rhyme
- Listen actively and respond to others
- Ask for help and communicate feelings and needs

A range of teaching resources are available to centres.

Learners: The qualification is predominantly aimed at Key Stage 1. The target learner groups are year 1 and 2 pupils (indicative age 5-7 years old) but this is not prescriptive.

Qualification Information	
Accreditation information	ESB Oracy Award (Entry 1): My Voice and Me is an unregulated qualification.
Qualification objective	The overall objective of the qualification is to develop learners' clear, effective, confident oral communication in a range of contexts.
Assessment method	Assessment is carried out internally by teachers or centre staff through observation of learners completing a range of planned speaking and listening activities. Evidence may include audio or video recordings, observation notes, or learner workbooks, as outlined in the additional documentation for this qualification. Each learner's performance is judged against the grade descriptors provided. Centres submit a sample of assessed work for external moderation to confirm the accuracy and consistency of assessment decisions.
Prior knowledge, skills, and understanding	There are no formal entry requirements for this qualification. It is designed for learners at Entry Level who are developing foundational speaking and listening skills. Learners should be able to participate in short exchanges and show an emerging awareness of how to communicate appropriately with others.
Quality assurance	Centres delivering this qualification will receive guidance and support materials from ESB International to ensure consistent assessment practice. A sample of learners' evidence will be externally moderated to confirm the accuracy of internal assessment decisions and to maintain the standard.
Total individual assessment time	Not formally timed. Assessment takes place during normal teaching and learning activities, allowing learners to demonstrate skills naturally across a range of classroom contexts.

Reasonable Adjustments

Assessment should be a fair test of learners' skills and knowledge; for some learners the usual format of assessment may not be suitable or accessible. Learners with specific needs can apply for reasonable adjustments to be made to the assessment.

For further information on access arrangements, please see our Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy [here](#).

New Primary Qualifications – A Rationale

Speaking and listening are at the heart of learning, giving our young people the mechanisms to explore ideas, share understanding, and build relationships. The importance of spoken language is well established in research and policy, yet opportunities to assess and celebrate it within the classroom have often been limited.

For over seventy years, ESB International has championed oracy through its externally assessed qualifications, recognising learners for their ability to communicate with purpose, authenticity, and expression. The “My Voice” suite builds on this heritage, introducing an internally assessed model designed to embed oracy development more deeply into everyday teaching and learning.

The *My Voice* qualifications provide a structured, progressive framework for developing spoken language skills in primary settings. Each qualification gives learners the chance to communicate for real purposes: to inform, imagine, express, and connect in appropriate and meaningful ways. By enabling teachers to assess learners within familiar contexts, the suite offers formal recognition of oracy as a valued area of achievement, helping to give it parity with reading and writing.

The qualifications are designed to reduce barriers to participation, with flexible tasks and supportive assessment practices. Each level is mapped carefully, with clear outcomes that reflect growing complexity, independence, range and control. The tasks themselves are rooted in genuine communication rather than artificial or formulaic “test talk,” encouraging learners to be their authentic selves. Above all, *My Voice* is designed to help children find, shape, and share their voice, building self-belief and agency.

Through activities such as planned talks, collaborative discussion, functional exchanges, role-play, storytelling, reading aloud, recitation and retelling, learners develop their ability to communicate across a range of contexts and for a range of purposes. These include:

- **Personal and social communication:** expressing experiences, feelings, needs, preferences, ideas and viewpoints, while listening and responding to others;
- **Functional and practical communication:** asking for help or permission, giving and receiving information or instructions, making suggestions and contributing to collaborative problem-solving;
- **Educational communication:** answering questions, explaining ideas, giving reasons and examples, and participating in collaborative learning;
- **Community, civic and global communication:** communicating about and participating in matters connected to the learner’s immediate environment, familiar communities and, as they progress, wider social and global issues; and
- **Expressive and interpretive communication:** exploring and discussing stories, poems and other chosen texts, and communicating meaning through reading aloud, recitation, retelling or performance.

These experiences can strengthen literacy, deepen comprehension, and support wider personal development: fostering curiosity, critical thinking, and resilience.

The *My Voice* suite supports the National Curriculum’s spoken language aims while providing a practical framework for embedding oracy into everyday teaching. Its internal assessment model gives teachers ownership of the process, encourages reflection on classroom talk, and creates

ongoing opportunities for formative feedback. External moderation supports consistency and trust in outcomes, allowing schools to evidence progress with confidence.

This qualification suite reflects ESB International’s enduring mission to promote oracy as a vital life skill. By bringing our long-standing expertise into a classroom-based model, *My Voice* helps to reduce barriers for learners, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to be heard and valued.

Qualification Overview

Section 1: My voice and me

Give a talk lasting approximately 1 minute on a topic of your choice e.g.:

- Create an “All About Me” poster and present it to the class.
- Bring in a favourite object or photo from home and talk about why it is special.
- Share a story about a family trip, pet, or celebration.
- Explain a topic of personal interest.

Section 2: My voice with others

Learners complete at least five of the following activities. Activities should be selected so that, collectively, they provide sufficient evidence against all five assessment criteria for this section.

- Take a problem to an adult or friend and ask for/receive advice
- Ask permission to do a new activity, explaining why it should be allowed
- Tell an adult you are feeling unwell or upset and explain why
- Give clear instructions that a partner can follow
- Work together in pairs or a group to build a small structure
- Solve a classroom problem as a group
- Design a class display/poster together
- Take part in a simple question and answer chain
- Take part in a narrative building game

Section 3: My voice in stories

Learners choose and introduce a familiar story, nursery rhyme or poem and communicate its meaning through reading aloud, recitation or retelling. They briefly discuss their choice and respond to simple questions about the text. This may be completed with the teacher and a small group of peers or another familiar audience.

Assessment Objectives

AO1	Communicate ideas clearly and coherently in spoken language for a range of purposes
AO2	Engage with others through listening, responding, and collaborative talk
AO3	Use appropriate language and phrasing to express needs, ideas, choices, or viewpoints
AO4	Use vocal delivery, tone, and non-verbal expression to support meaning and engage listeners
AO5	Use vocal and non-verbal expression, pacing, and intonation to convey meaning when reading aloud or performing from memory

Assessment and Grading

The qualification is internally assessed by trained centre staff and externally moderated by ESB International.

Assessment evidence is gathered cumulatively through activities completed during normal teaching and learning. Centres compile a portfolio of evidence for each learner, which must provide sufficient evidence for assessors to make secure judgements against the qualification's assessment criteria.

The qualification contains 13 assessment criteria across three sections:

Assessment section	Number of criteria
Section 1: My voice and me	4
Section 2: My voice with others	5
Section 3: My voice in stories	4
Total	13

Each criterion is assessed separately against the published grade descriptors and awarded one of the following criterion grades:

- Unsuccessful,
- Pass,
- Merit, or
- Distinction.

Criterion-level judgements are combined to determine the learner's overall qualification outcome. Overall outcomes are available at Pass, Merit and Distinction, with Unclassified used where the minimum standard for the qualification has not been met.

The grading model recognises performance across the qualification as a whole. Learners are not required to achieve the same grade in every criterion and may demonstrate different profiles of strength across activities and communication contexts. However, to achieve the qualification, learners must demonstrate successful performance in each of the three assessment sections.

Learners are not required to demonstrate every assessment objective within every activity. Evidence may be gathered across several relevant activities, provided that there is sufficient evidence to make a secure judgement against each criterion.

Registered centres receive detailed guidance on assessment, evidence requirements, grading, internal quality assurance and the calculation of overall outcomes. Centre judgements are subject to external moderation by ESB International to support the consistent application of the qualification standard.

Grade Descriptors

Section 1: My voice and me	Pass	Merit	Distinction
AO1: Structure	Talk has a clear beginning or ending.	Talk has a clear beginning and ending.	Talk has a clear beginning, middle, and ending.
AO3: Explaining	Gives one or two short and simple descriptions, opinions, or facts.	Gives at least two more detailed explanations, using conjunctions such as 'because', 'so', 'but'.	Uses added details, examples or simple comparisons to make their ideas clearer or more interesting.
AO4: Verbal expression	Voice is clear and/or audible.	Voice is clear and audible.	Uses some change in pause, tone, pace, pitch or emphasis to share meaning.
AO4: Non-verbal expression	Uses a simple gesture or facial expression when reminded during the talk (e.g. waves, smiles when prompted).	Uses a gesture or facial expression at least once while speaking (e.g. smiles, nods, shows excitement).	Uses gesture or facial expression at least once to help the listener understand or enjoy the talk (e.g. showing size, shape, or emotion).

Section 2: My voice with others	Pass	Merit	Distinction
AO1: Organise/sequence information for others	Gives short pieces of information, sometimes unclear or out of order.	Gives more detailed pieces of information in a mostly logical order, sometimes using simple discourse markers (and, then).	Gives a clear sequence of information or events in logical order, using familiar discourse markers (first, then, after that, because, so) to help others follow.
AO2: Active listening	Shows listening when prompted (e.g. looks at the speaker, faces them, or nods when reminded).	Shows listening independently, using a range of signs such as eye contact, nodding, or short verbal responses (e.g. <i>yeah, okay, I know</i>).	Shows listening independently and gives a short response that links directly to what another speaker has said (e.g. answers a question, agrees or disagrees, adds a related idea).
AO2: Turn-taking	Takes turns when prompted (e.g. speaks after being invited or reminded, may interrupt or talk over others).	Takes turns without prompting, usually waiting for an appropriate time to speak. May show awareness of others by pausing or making eye contact.	Takes turns independently, showing clear awareness of others (e.g. waits, listens, or invites another person to speak). May use short phrases to hand over or include others (e.g. <i>your turn, what do you think?</i>).
AO3: Describing wants/needs/feelings	Expresses a want, need or feeling with a single word or short phrase, sometimes with support (e.g. <i>help, toilet, sad</i>).	Expresses a want, need or feeling using an age-appropriate phrase (e.g. <i>I need help with this, I feel sad, Can I go outside?</i>).	Expresses a want, need, or feeling clearly using an age-appropriate functional phrase , adding detail, politeness, or suggestion (e.g. <i>I feel sad because my picture ripped, could I have another please?</i>).
AO4: Voice and gesture to aid collaboration	Uses voice or gesture to help others understand when reminded (e.g. repeats something more loudly when prompted).	Uses voice or gesture on their own to help others understand in a short exchange (e.g. speaks clearly, points, or nods).	Uses voice or gesture independently and with control so that others can easily follow what is meant (e.g. changes tone, shows size or direction, adds emphasis).

Section 3: My voice in stories	Pass	Merit	Distinction
AO2: Questions	Listens to a question with support and gives a short or single-word response (e.g. <i>yes, dog, blue.</i>)	Listens to a question independently and gives a short, relevant answer (e.g. <i>The dog ran away, she was happy.</i>).	Listens and responds clearly to a question, giving extra information or explanation (e.g. <i>She was happy because she found her cat, it was in the forest where they got lost.</i>).
AO3: Talk about a chosen text	Gives a simple reason for their choice. (e.g. <i>"I like it because it's funny."</i>)	Gives a reason for their choice and adds a simple <i>who/what/where</i> detail that helps explain their enjoyment. (e.g. <i>"I like it because the dog runs away into the mud and that bit makes me laugh."</i>)	Gives a clear reason for their choice and adds <i>why/how</i> detail to explain their thinking, offering more than one connected reason. (e.g. <i>"I like it because it's really funny when the dog gets muddy, and I like stories that make me laugh. And I like that the girl helped the dog. She was kind, and I like kind characters."</i>)
AO5: Verbal Expression	Speaks clearly and audibly enough to be heard when retelling, reciting or reading a chosen text, though pace or delivery may be rushed, hesitant, or flat.	Retells, recites or reads a chosen text audibly and mostly smoothly, using tone, pace, or emphasis at key moments to help the listener understand what is happening.	Uses voice with clear control to bring the chosen text to life, varying tone, pace, or emphasis deliberately to show meaning, mood, or character, and to keep the listener engaged.
AO5: Non-verbal expression	Looks towards audience to share the chosen text at the start and end, when prompted.	Looks towards the audience to share the chosen text at several points, without prompting.	Uses a range of non-verbal behaviours to engage the audience in the chosen text (e.g. eye contact, facial expression, gesture, or body movement).

Appendix

Use of the Term “Age-Appropriate”

In this qualification, the term *age-appropriate* is used to describe communication that reflects typical language development, social awareness, and expressive ability for learners aged 5–7 years (Key Stage 1).

It is distinct from *level-appropriate*, which implies alignment with a broader qualification framework or standardised attainment scale.

Using *age-appropriate* ensures that assessment focuses on:

- **Developmental relevance:** recognising the expected range of spoken language forms and social conventions for this age group.
- **Equity of access:** valuing emerging communication in young learners, including those with SEND or EAL profiles, within realistic developmental expectations.
- **Observability and clarity:** enabling assessors to make reliable judgements based on tangible, age-typical behaviours (e.g. vocabulary choice, sentence structure, tone, gesture).

While *age-appropriate* describes the **expected range** for the cohort, learners who demonstrate skills **beyond those typical for their age**, for example, by using more complex sentence structures, richer vocabulary, or greater control of tone and expression, should be recognised and rewarded accordingly.

Assessors should therefore interpret *age appropriate* as referring to the **developmental benchmark** for this age group, not a limit on attainment, and should apply professional judgement to acknowledge both typical and advanced communication performance.

Use of the Term “With Control”

In this qualification, the term *with control* is used to describe a learner’s ability to use elements of spoken communication such as voice, tone, pace, facial expression, or gesture **purposefully and appropriately** to support meaning.

It does not imply restraint, formality, or technical mastery. Rather, it reflects that the learner is beginning to make **conscious or consistent choices** in how they communicate, suited to the situation and audience.

Teachers and moderators should look for evidence that the learner:

- **Uses voice or gesture intentionally** (e.g. speaking more clearly or with emphasis to highlight meaning).
- **Adjusts communication for purpose or listener** (e.g. slowing down, showing emotion, or clarifying an idea).
- **Maintains control over delivery** rather than relying on chance or imitation.

At this developmental stage (ages 5–7), *with control* should be understood as the emerging ability to **self-regulate communication**: showing awareness of how expressive choices help others to understand rather than as a demand for technical precision or adult-like performance.

Interpretation of Non-Verbal Communication

References to non-verbal communication within the grade descriptors include facial expression, gesture, body movement, orientation and other physical or visual behaviours that contribute to meaning, interaction or audience engagement.

The examples given within the descriptors are illustrative rather than prescriptive. Learners are not expected to demonstrate every behaviour listed, and no single behaviour, including eye contact, is required. Assessors should consider the learner's individual communication profile and the non-verbal resources available to them.

Non-verbal communication may be demonstrated in different ways. For example, a learner might use a hand gesture to emphasise a point, change their facial expression to communicate emotion, use body movement to represent character or action, or direct attention towards an object, image or communication aid.

Similarly, active listening should not be judged solely through eye contact, physical stillness or facing the speaker. Learners may demonstrate listening through a relevant verbal or non-verbal response, following what has been said, taking an appropriate turn, responding through AAC, or contributing an idea that connects with another speaker's contribution.

Assessment should focus on whether the learner uses their available communication resources purposefully and appropriately to support meaning, understanding or participation. Further guidance and examples of varied communication profiles are provided through centre training and support materials.

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