CARSHALTON BOYS SPORTS COLLEGE

English Faculty · Oracy

Year 9 Vocabulary Booklet

Tier 2 and Tier 3 Oracy Vocabulary

ESB Level 2 Certificate in Speech · Speech to Connect Pathway

Academic Year 2026–2027

Excellence • Character • Aspiration

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A Note for Parents and Pupils

This booklet contains the key Tier 2 (academic) and Tier 3 (subject-specific) vocabulary for Year 9 Oracy on the ESB Level 2 Certificate in Speech, Speech to Connect pathway. Knowing these words — not just recognising them, but being able to use them accurately when speaking and writing — is one of the most important things a pupil can do to speak with confidence and precision. Year 9 is the bridging year into GCSE-style talk and writing, where strong performance depends on the confident, accurate use of subject vocabulary.

Words marked E (Expected) are the core vocabulary that every pupil must know by the end of the unit. Words marked A (Aspirational) are stretch vocabulary for pupils aiming to perform at the highest level — including those working towards Merit Plus and Distinction. All pupils are encouraged to attempt the A words.

How to learn vocabulary: Metacognitive strategies

Research shows that the most effective ways to learn vocabulary are not simply re-reading the list. Here are the strategies we recommend:

- **Look–Cover–Write–Check:** Look at the word and definition. Cover them up. Write the word and definition from memory. Check. Repeat for any you could not recall.
- **The Leitner System (flashcards):** Write the word on one side of a card, the definition and an example on the other. Sort cards into three piles: ‘know well’ (review weekly), ‘know fairly’ (review daily) and ‘don’t know yet’ (review every session). Promote and demote cards as you go.
- **Say it aloud:** Oracy vocabulary is learnt best by speaking. Say each word in a full sentence aloud — ideally to a parent, carer or friend — rather than only reading it silently.
- **Dual coding:** Draw a small symbol or sketch next to each word to create a visual memory anchor — for example, a wave for intonation or three dots for a tricolon.
- **Self-quizzing:** Ask someone to test you using the word list. Take turns explaining definitions. This is far more effective than reading alone.
- **Use it in talk and writing:** Once you can define a word, use it in a sentence about a talk, a reading or a discussion. Pupils who use Tier 3 vocabulary accurately consistently perform at a higher level.
- **Spaced retrieval:** Revisit words at increasing intervals (after 1 day, 3 days, 7 days, 14 days). This is the single most effective study habit research has identified for long-term retention.

Suggested weekly routine

Spend 10 minutes per night, five nights per week, on vocabulary for the current unit. Rotate through the strategies above rather than using only one. By the end of each unit, aim to have covered every E word at least five times and every A word at least three times, and to be using both confidently when you speak in lessons.

E	Expected — core vocabulary every pupil must learn.
A	Aspirational — stretch vocabulary for higher-level performance.

Unit 1: Foundations of Oracy — Vocabulary

Word	Type	Tier	E/A	Definition	Example in Use
oracy	*noun*	T3	**E**	The ability to express yourself fluently and effectively through spoken language.	*Strong oracy means speaking clearly, listening carefully and responding with thought.*
projection	*noun*	T3	**E**	Controlling the strength of the voice so it carries clearly to an audience without shouting.	*Good projection let him reach the back of the room without straining his voice.*
articulation	*noun*	T3	**E**	The clear and precise shaping of sounds and words when speaking.	*Careful articulation ensures every word of a memorised piece is understood.*
enunciation	*noun*	T3	**E**	Pronouncing words clearly and distinctly so they are easy to follow.	*Slowing down and improving her enunciation made the talk far easier to follow.*
intonation	*noun*	T3	**E**	The rise and fall of the voice in speech, used to convey meaning and feeling.	*Rising intonation at the end of a sentence can signal a question or invite a reply.*
pace	*noun*	T3	**E**	The speed at which a speaker delivers their words.	*Varying the pace — slowing for key points — stops a talk from sounding rushed.*
pause	*noun*	T3	**E**	A deliberate silence used for emphasis or to let an idea land.	*A well-placed pause after an important point gives the audience time to absorb it.*
tone	*noun*	T3	**E**	The quality of the voice that conveys attitude or emotion.	*A warm, confident tone helps an audience trust the speaker.*
volume	*noun*	T3	**E**	How loud or quiet the voice is.	*Dropping the volume can draw an audience in just as well as raising it.*
emphasis	*noun*	T3	**E**	Special stress placed on a word or phrase to mark its importance.	*Placing emphasis on the word "never" made the speaker's point unmistakable.*
register	*noun*	T3	**E**	The level of formality in language, chosen to suit the audience and purpose.	*A formal register is expected in the assessment, even when the topic is personal.*
Standard English	*noun*	T3	**E**	The form of English used in formal contexts, following widely accepted grammar and vocabulary; no particular accent is required.	*Pupils are assessed on confident use of Standard English, not on having an accent.*

Word	Type	Tier	E/A	Definition	Example in Use
gesture	*noun*	T3	**E**	A movement of the hands, arms or body used to add meaning or emphasis.	*A simple open-handed gesture can make a speaker seem welcoming and sincere.*
posture	*noun*	T3	**E**	The way a speaker holds and positions the body.	*Upright, open posture signals confidence before a single word is spoken.*
eye contact	*noun*	T3	**E**	Looking directly at members of the audience to engage them.	*Sharing eye contact around the whole group, not just the assessor, keeps everyone involved.*
active listening	*noun*	T3	**E**	Listening attentively and showing engagement in order to respond thoughtfully.	*Active listening means tracking the speaker, not just waiting for your turn.*
signposting	*noun*	T3	**E**	Words and phrases that guide the listener through the structure of a talk.	*Signposting phrases such as "firstly" and "to conclude" help the audience follow you.*
ground rules	*noun*	T3	**E**	Agreed expectations that govern how a group talks together.	*The class ground rules — agree, build, challenge — keep discussion respectful.*
diction	*noun*	T3	**A**	A speaker's choice of words and the clarity with which they are spoken.	*Precise diction lends authority to a formal presentation.*
modulation	*noun*	T3	**A**	Varying the pitch, volume and tone of the voice for effect.	*Skilful modulation prevents a memorised piece from sounding flat or robotic.*
cadence	*noun*	T3	**A**	The rhythmic rise and fall of the voice in speech.	*The natural cadence of her delivery made the poem feel effortless.*
prosody	*noun*	T3	**A**	The patterns of rhythm, stress and intonation in spoken language.	*Attention to prosody separates expressive reading from mechanical reading.*
articulate	*verb*	T2	**E**	To express an idea clearly in spoken or written words.	*She articulated her argument so clearly that no one needed it repeated.*
convey	*verb*	T2	**E**	To communicate or express a meaning, idea or feeling.	*A speaker uses pause and tone to convey emotion, not just words.*
coherent	*adj*	T2	**E**	Logical, clear and well organised, so it is easy to follow.	*A coherent talk moves logically from one point to the next.*

Word	Type	Tier	E/A	Definition	Example in Use
fluent	*adj*	T2	**E**	Able to speak smoothly and easily, without unnecessary hesitation.	*Regular rehearsal helps a nervous speaker become more fluent.*
deliberate	*adj*	T2	**E**	Done consciously and on purpose.	*A deliberate pause is a choice, not an accident.*
sustain	*verb*	T2	**A**	To keep something going steadily over a period of time.	*The challenge of the live assessment is to sustain focus across all four sections.*

Unit 2: The Biographical Talk — Vocabulary

Word	Type	Tier	E/A	Definition	Example in Use
biographical	*adj*	T3	**E**	Relating to the events and details of a person's life.	*The biographical talk focuses on the achievements and importance of one person.*
introduction	*noun*	T3	**E**	The opening of a talk that engages the audience and sets up what follows.	*An original introduction grabs the audience's attention in the first few seconds.*
conclusion	*noun*	T3	**E**	The closing of a talk that draws ideas together and leaves a lasting impression.	*A strong conclusion returns to the opening idea to give the talk a satisfying shape.*
audio-visual support	*noun*	T3	**E**	Images, slides, objects or recordings used to enhance a talk.	*Well-chosen audio-visual support should further understanding, not merely decorate.*
audience awareness	*noun*	T3	**E**	A speaker's sensitivity to the needs, interest and reactions of listeners.	*Audience awareness means adjusting your delivery when the group is losing focus.*
rhetorical device	*noun*	T3	**E**	A technique used to make speech more persuasive or memorable.	*A rhetorical device such as a tricolon can make a closing line land powerfully.*
rhetorical question	*noun*	T3	**E**	A question asked for effect, not requiring an answer.	*Opening with a rhetorical question invites the audience to think alongside you.*
anecdote	*noun*	T3	**E**	A short, telling story used to illustrate a point.	*A brief anecdote about her childhood made the subject feel real to the audience.*
evidence	*noun*	T3	**E**	Facts, examples or details used to support a claim.	*Backing each point with evidence from your research makes a talk convincing.*
source	*noun*	T3	**E**	A place or document from which information is gathered.	*Pupils are expected to research from a range of sources, not the internet alone.*
tricolon	*noun*	T3	**A**	A rhetorical pattern of three parallel words, phrases or clauses.	*"Excellence, character, aspiration" is a tricolon that is easy to remember.*
anaphora	*noun*	T3	**A**	The deliberate repetition of a word or phrase at the start of successive clauses.	*Anaphora — repeating "I have a dream" — gives a speech rhythm and force.*

Word	Type	Tier	E/A	Definition	Example in Use
oratory	*noun*	T3	**A**	The art of formal, persuasive public speaking.	*The great traditions of oratory show how voice and structure can move an audience.*
credibility	*noun*	T3	**A**	The quality of being trusted and believed by an audience.	*Citing reliable sources builds the speaker's credibility.*
select	*verb*	T2	**E**	To choose carefully from a range of options.	*A skilled speaker selects only the most telling details from their research.*
organise	*verb*	T2	**E**	To arrange material in a logical, structured way.	*Organising points from most to least important keeps a talk focused.*
relevant	*adj*	T2	**E**	Closely connected to the matter in hand.	*Every point in a four-minute talk should be relevant to the subject's importance.*
emphasise	*verb*	T2	**E**	To give special importance to something.	*The conclusion should emphasise why the subject still matters today.*
synthesise	*verb*	T2	**A**	To combine information from different sources into a coherent whole.	*The best talks synthesise several sources rather than retelling just one.*
discerning	*adj*	T2	**A**	Showing good judgement in selecting what matters.	*A discerning choice of image can say more than a paragraph of speech.*

Unit 3: Speaking by Heart — Vocabulary

Word	Type	Tier	E/A	Definition	Example in Use
recitation	*noun*	T3	**E**	A spoken performance of a memorised piece.	*A confident recitation conveys meaning, not just memorised words.*
memorisation	*noun*	T3	**E**	The process of learning something so it can be reproduced from memory.	*Chunking a poem into sections makes memorisation more secure.*
interpretation	*noun*	T3	**E**	A performer's understanding of a text, expressed through delivery.	*Two pupils can give very different interpretations of the same poem.*
mood	*noun*	T3	**E**	The atmosphere or feeling a piece creates in the audience.	*A slower pace can establish a sombre mood from the opening line.*
atmosphere	*noun*	T3	**E**	The overall emotional tone of a piece or performance.	*Stillness and silence can build atmosphere before a single word is spoken.*
metre	*noun*	T3	**E**	The rhythmic pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry.	*Tapping out the metre helps a performer feel the rhythm of the verse.*
stanza	*noun*	T3	**E**	A group of lines forming a unit within a poem.	*She paused briefly between each stanza to let the imagery settle.*
verse	*noun*	T3	**E**	Writing arranged with rhythm, usually in lines and stanzas; poetry.	*Speaking verse aloud reveals its rhythm in a way silent reading cannot.*
prose	*noun*	T3	**E**	Ordinary written or spoken language without metrical structure.	*A prose extract is performed differently from a tightly metered poem.*
inflection	*noun*	T3	**E**	A change in the pitch or tone of the voice.	*A rising inflection can suggest uncertainty or surprise.*
expression	*noun*	T3	**E**	The conveying of feeling and meaning through voice and face.	*Reading with expression brings a character's emotion to life.*
enjambment	*noun*	T3	**A**	The continuation of a sentence beyond the end of a line of verse.	*Honouring the enjambment, she carried the thought across the line break without stopping.*
caesura	*noun*	T3	**A**	A deliberate pause or break within a line of poetry.	*The caesura in the middle of the line gave the performance a moment of tension.*
soliloquy	*noun*	T3	**A**	A speech in which a character speaks their thoughts aloud, alone.	*A soliloquy lets the performer share a*

Word	Type	Tier	E/A	Definition	Example in Use
					character's private feelings with the audience.
monologue	*noun*	T3	**A**	A long speech delivered by one person, often in drama.	*He chose a dramatic monologue that offered scope for vocal variety.*
pathos	*noun*	T3	**A**	A quality in a piece that evokes pity or sadness in the audience.	*The pathos of the final stanza moved the whole group.*
evoke	*verb*	T2	**E**	To bring a feeling, memory or image to mind.	*A skilled performer can evoke a whole landscape through tone alone.*
interpret	*verb*	T2	**E**	To explain or perform the meaning of something.	*Pupils interpret a poem before they commit it to memory.*
sustained	*adj*	T2	**E**	Continued steadily without weakening.	*A sustained interpretation holds the mood from the first line to the last.*
nuance	*noun*	T2	**A**	A subtle difference in meaning, feeling or tone.	*Catching the nuance of a single word can transform a line.*
spontaneity	*noun*	T2	**A**	The quality of seeming natural and unrehearsed.	*The best memorised performances keep a sense of spontaneity.*

Unit 4: Commentary on a Prepared Reading — Vocabulary

Word	Type	Tier	E/A	Definition	Example in Use
commentary	*noun*	T3	**E**	Spoken explanation and analysis, here of characters and their roles.	*The commentary should move from describing characters to commenting on their role in the plot.*
character	*noun*	T3	**E**	A person represented in a story, play or poem.	*Bringing out each character's voice keeps a reading from sounding flat.*
characterisation	*noun*	T3	**E**	The way a writer creates and develops a character.	*Strong characterisation in the reading helps the audience tell speakers apart.*
narrative	*noun*	T3	**E**	The account of connected events; a story.	*A clear contrast between narrative and dialogue helps listeners follow the reading.*
dialogue	*noun*	T3	**E**	Spoken exchange between characters.	*She gave each line of dialogue a slightly different voice.*
plot	*noun*	T3	**E**	The sequence of events that make up a story.	*You must know the whole plot well enough to comment on it with insight.*
extract	*noun*	T3	**E**	A short passage taken from a longer text.	*Pupils choose a 150–200 word extract that offers scope for expression.*
protagonist	*noun*	T3	**E**	The main character in a story.	*The protagonist's change of heart is the turning point of the extract.*
fluency	*noun*	T3	**E**	The ability to read or speak smoothly and easily.	*Rehearsing aloud improves fluency and reduces stumbling.*
pacing	*noun*	T3	**E**	Controlling the speed of a reading for effect.	*Sensitive pacing builds suspense towards the climax of the extract.*
antagonist	*noun*	T3	**A**	A character who opposes the protagonist.	*A change in tone signalled the antagonist's entrance.*
motivation	*noun*	T3	**A**	The reasons behind a character's actions.	*Understanding a character's motivation helps a reader voice them convincingly.*
narrator	*noun*	T3	**A**	The voice that tells a story.	*The reader distinguished the calm narrator from the anxious characters.*

Word	Type	Tier	E/A	Definition	Example in Use
foreshadowing	*noun*	T3	**A**	A writer's hints at events that will happen later in the story.	*Reading the foreshadowing with a knowing tone rewards an attentive audience.*
insight	*noun*	T2	**E**	A deep or accurate understanding of something.	*A good commentary shows insight into why a character behaves as they do.*
distinguish	*verb*	T2	**E**	To recognise or show a difference between things.	*Vocal variety lets the audience distinguish one character from another.*
analyse	*verb*	T2	**E**	To examine something in detail in order to understand it.	*Pupils analyse the relationship between two characters before reading.*
contrast	*noun*	T2	**E**	A noticeable difference between two things.	*A clear contrast between narration and dialogue makes the reading engaging.*
mature	*adj*	T2	**A**	Showing developed, thoughtful understanding.	*A mature commentary weighs a character's strengths and flaws.*
subtle	*adj*	T2	**A**	Not obvious; delicate or understated.	*A subtle shift of tone can signal a change in mood without exaggeration.*

Unit 5: Listening, Responding & Exchanging Views — Vocabulary

Word	Type	Tier	E/A	Definition	Example in Use
discussion	*noun*	T3	**E**	A formal spoken exchange of ideas among a group.	*In the final section, pupils take part in a five-minute formal discussion.*
open question	*noun*	T3	**E**	A question that invites a developed, extended answer.	*"Why do you think that mattered?" is an open question that opens up discussion.*
closed question	*noun*	T3	**E**	A question that can be answered in a word or two.	*"Did you enjoy it?" is a closed question that tends to close discussion down.*
response	*noun*	T3	**E**	A reply or reaction to a question or comment.	*A full response gives reasons, not just an opinion.*
contribution	*noun*	T3	**E**	Something a speaker adds to a discussion.	*An unprompted contribution shows genuine engagement with the topic.*
build on	*verb*	T3	**E**	To develop or extend another person's point.	*"I'd like to build on that by adding…" keeps a discussion moving forward.*
challenge	*verb*	T3	**E**	To question or disagree with an idea respectfully.	*You can challenge an idea courteously without criticising the person.*
turn-taking	*noun*	T3	**E**	Sharing speaking opportunities fairly within a group.	*Good turn-taking ensures every member of the six is heard.*
clarify	*verb*	T3	**E**	To make something clearer or easier to understand.	*Asking a question to clarify shows you are listening carefully.*
summarise	*verb*	T3	**E**	To give a brief statement of the main points.	*Summarising the group's views shows you have followed the discussion.*
viewpoint	*noun*	T3	**E**	A particular way of thinking about something; an opinion.	*A strong discussion explores more than one viewpoint.*
rebuttal	*noun*	T3	**A**	A reply that argues against a previous point.	*A calm, evidence-based rebuttal is more effective than raising your voice.*
concession	*noun*	T3	**A**	An admission that part of an opposing view has merit.	*A well-judged concession can actually strengthen your own argument.*
chair	*verb*	T3	**A**	To guide and manage a discussion.	*Chairing the group, she made sure quieter members had a chance to speak.*

Word	Type	Tier	E/A	Definition	Example in Use
substantiate	*verb*	T3	**A**	To support a claim with evidence.	*A high-level contribution substantiates each point rather than merely asserting it.*
justify	*verb*	T2	**E**	To give good reasons for a view or action.	*You should be ready to justify your opinion when questioned.*
evaluate	*verb*	T2	**E**	To weigh up strengths and weaknesses to reach a judgement.	*The group evaluated which talk had been the most persuasive.*
elaborate	*verb*	T2	**E**	To add more detail to develop a point.	*When asked to elaborate, she gave a specific example.*
acknowledge	*verb*	T2	**E**	To recognise or accept a point or person.	*Acknowledging another speaker's idea before adding your own shows respect.*
concede	*verb*	T2	**A**	To admit that something is true or valid.	*He was willing to concede a fair point while holding to his overall view.*
perceptive	*adj*	T2	**A**	Showing keen insight and understanding.	*A perceptive question can move a whole discussion forward.*

End of Year 9 Oracy Vocabulary Booklet

This booklet should be kept at home and used as the basis for weekly homework throughout the year. A digital copy is available on Google Classroom. Vocabulary will be set as a regular homework task for 2026–2027 — please support pupils in using this booklet little and often.