



DOVER COURT
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
SINGAPORE
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

Communication Skills & Top Tips



Aims

- To have an increased awareness and understanding of what is involved in communication
- To identify communication breakdowns
- To learn strategies to facilitate children's communication skills

Who Are We?

SALT Team

DCIS has a team of Speech and Language therapists. Our names are:

- Fatima Ionescu
 - Nikoletta Mappouridou
 - Melanie Yates
 - Debora Marchini
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- We see children of all ages, across the school



How Do We Communicate: Activity

- Think of what you're going to do this evening after work.
- Turn to the person next to you and describe this WITHOUT SPEAKING OR WRITING.
- The other person can ask questions to check if they have understood.

Why Do We Communicate

Children communicate:

- To request something, e.g. food/toy
- To show/tell you something
- To tell a story
- To get attention
- To answer a question/respond to someone else
- To ask a question
- To greet/say goodbye
- To reject/protest
- To describe how they are feeling

What Is Communication

Early Interaction

A desire to communicate

Interest in other people

Smiling

Laughing

Attention

Looking at the person

Sharing the same focus

Shifting attention from one thing to another

Social Skills

Interest in others

Joint attention

Having conversations

Turn-taking

Social rules

Body language

Understanding (Receptive Language)

Facial expressions and gestures

Words

Concepts e.g. time, colour

Sentence structures

Intonation

What Is Communication

Talking (Expressive Language)

Facial expressions and gestures

Words

Phrases

Sentences

Grammar

Speech Sounds/ Fluency

Learning sounds

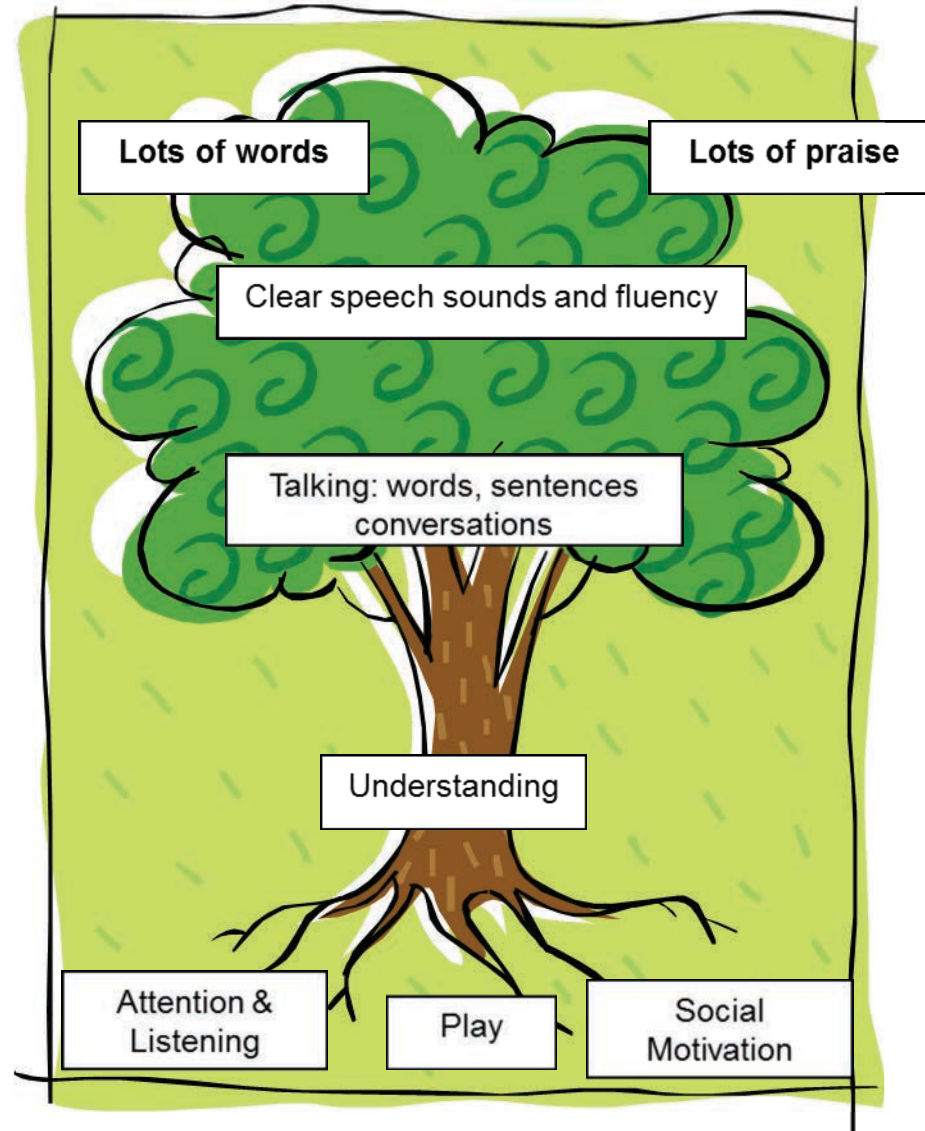
Pronouncing sounds

Sequencing sounds

Coordinating movements

Hesitations, repetitions and being stuck while talking

Strategies: Communication Tree



Follow the instructions...

Communication Breakdowns: What Can It Look Like?

Attention & Listening Skills:

- Tune in and out when listening to spoken information
- Not filter out irrelevant information
- Difficulty concentrating

Communication Breakdowns: Strategies

Attention & Listening Skills:

- **Focus your child's attention before** giving an instruction, e.g. "Jack... Listen"
- Make your child aware of good listening skills, e.g. **teach the rules for listening** (verbally and visually)
- **Break down long instructions** into simple sentences, e.g. "First do x (Pause) Then do y"
- Check that your child has listened by asking them to **explain/ show** what they have to do
- Make listening **fun**, for example, by letting your child take turns being the teacher
- Give **specific praise**, e.g. 'great listening to the special word I used'

Communication Breakdowns: What Can It Look Like?

Understanding Skills:

- Difficulty understanding **every day language**, including following instructions, conversation or questions
- Difficulty understanding **academic language**, e.g. concepts and vocabulary
- Difficulty understanding **inferences, sarcasm, metaphors, humour**
- **Disguise a difficulty** by watching and/or copying others
- **Avoid tasks** by opting out
- Be disruptive and present with **negative behaviours**
- Difficulty **remembering key information**, including how to carry out practical tasks

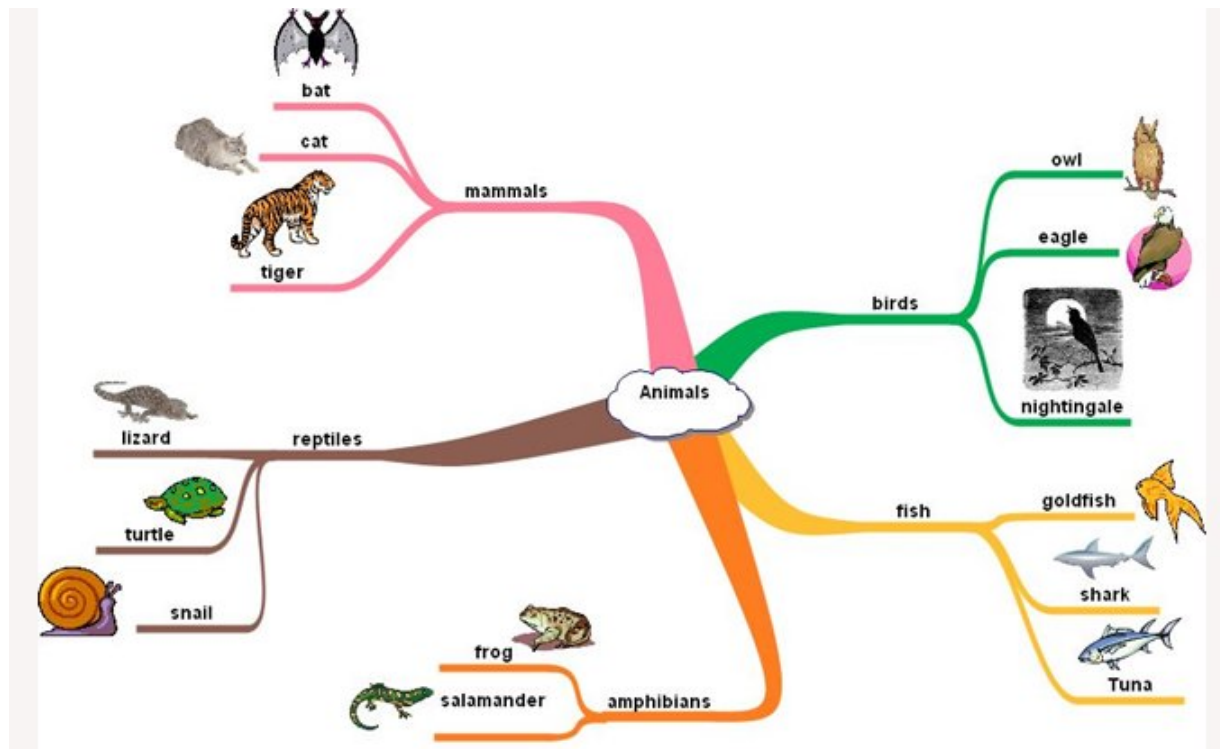
Communication Breakdowns: Strategies

Understanding Skills:

- **Adapt the length, structure and type of words** in your sentences to suit your child 's understanding
- **Get down to your child 's level**, e.g. talk face to face
- To understand language, children need to see, hear and do, e.g. children may need to see objects/ pictures, gestures, hear your words and have an opportunity to try the activities for themselves
- **Encourage your child to tell you when he/she doesn't understand**
- Encourage your child to use strategies to understand information, e.g. children can be asked to repeat information in their heads/ out loud and/or write down important words
- **Visuals are crucial to support the understanding of children's of all ages**, e.g. visual timetables, visual timelines, mind maps, gesture, signs
- Be mindful of your expressions as your child may not understand them

Communication Breakdowns: Strategies

Understanding Skills (Mind Map):



Communication Breakdowns: Strategies

Understanding Skills:

Makaton Signs

Communication Breakdowns: What Can It Look Like?

Talking Skills:

- Use **mostly made up words** and/or use **incorrect word order** in sentences
- **Difficulty asking and answering questions**, particularly 'why/how'
- Difficulty **finding the right words** and/or using **correct grammar**
- Use **non-specific words**, e.g. 'things/ that', etc.
- Be unable to **organise thoughts** to show their knowledge related to a topic
- Difficulty **organising ideas** in the correct order and **retelling narratives**
- Get **frustrated** when trying to communicate their message
- **Avoid** the frustration of talking and/or writing by stating 'I don't know' and/or **giving up**

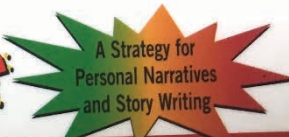
Communication Breakdowns: Strategies

Talking Skills:

- Children need to understand language before they can use language, so frequent adult model and repetition is necessary
- When modeling language, **repeat** what your child says and **add** one more word to expand his/her sentence, while **emphasising key words**
- **Five finger rule:** Use 4 comments before you ask a question. Let us practise!
- **Adapt your questions** to your child 's level, e.g. yes/ no questions for children with limited vocabulary and questions such as 'what happened/ why/ how' for children with stronger language skills
- Provide **verbal and/or visual choices**
- **OWL:** Observe, wait and listen (up to 10 seconds) and respond
- Introduce **visual narrative planners** to aid planning and organisation of ideas

Communication Breakdowns: Strategies

Talking Skills:

The **SGM® Episode Organizer**  A Strategy for Personal Narratives and Story Writing

Beginning	Middle	End
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Think about: <input type="checkbox"/> age/gender <input type="checkbox"/> physical description <input type="checkbox"/> likes/dislikes <input type="checkbox"/> personality</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Think about a "ho-hum" day in the Setting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Think about the Kick-Off.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Think about at least two Feelings.</p> <p>CHARACTER: Who or What is your story about?</p> <p>SETTING: Where and When does your story take place?</p> <p>KICK-OFF (Initiating Event): What good or bad event happened to cause the Character (him/her/it/yourself) to notice that it was <u>not</u> a "ho-hum" day...?</p> <p>FEELING (Internal Response): What are the Character's Feelings about what happened?</p> <p>PLAN: Stop! What does the Character Plan to do? Think about the Kick-Off, Feeling(s) and what result the Character wants to achieve.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> To begin with/ First</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Then</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Next</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Further more</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Finally</p> <p>1 ATTEMPTS: What does the Character do to carry out the Plan?</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> As a result</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Think about...</p> <p>feelings</p> <p>lesson learned</p> <p>moral of the story</p> <p>DIRECT CONSEQUENCE: What happened as a result of the Character's Plan and Attempts?</p> <p>RESOLUTION: How does the Character Feel about the Direct Consequence?</p> <p>"Thicken the Plot..." Begin Another Episode...</p>

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Communication Breakdowns: What Can It Look Like?

Speech and Fluency Skills:

- Difficulty **discriminating speech sounds**
- Difficulty **pronouncing speech sounds** in words and/or sentences
- Show a difficulty with **literacy skills**, e.g. reading and spelling
- Be **unintelligible**
- Have **loss of fluency** by repeating and/or getting stuck on a sound, syllable or word
- Be **reluctant to talk**
- Have **increased anxiety** in talking situations

Communication Breakdowns: Strategies

Speech and Fluency Skills:

- **Acknowledge** what your child says; however, **provide models of accurate speech sounds but do not ask your child to repeat the correct sounds**
- When your child is unintelligible, **avoid asking him/her to repeat** him/herself. Instead, **try and interpret** what your child said so that he/she has an opportunity to either confirm your interpretation or correct it
- Give your child **opportunities for choices** to elicit naming and/or point
- Give your child **time to finish his/her sentences**. If your child is struggling to get his/her words out, **allow thinking time** instead of asking questions and/or giving your child the words
- Asking your child to slow down or take deep breaths is not always helpful. Instead it is more effective for adults to **model slow talking in a calm, relaxed manner**
- Create speaking opportunities, which do not involve your child talking over his/her peers or being interrupted

Communication Breakdowns: What Can It Look Like?

Social Communication Skills:

- Have poor **play skills**, e.g. immature skills, not knowing how to play with specific toys and their peers
- Difficulty **sharing** and **taking turns**
- Difficulty **interrupting appropriately**
- Be unable to **monitor their language** and the impact it has on others
- Difficulty starting, maintaining and ending a **conversation**
- May say inappropriate things without realising
- Have inappropriate **body language**, e.g. eye contact, posture, use of distance, voice volume
- Be unable to **adapt communication** to suit the situation
- Have poor **motivation to communicate**

Communication Breakdowns: Strategies

Social Communication Skills:

- For younger children, **follow the children's lead while modeling different play activities** that focus on pretend and imaginative play
- **Visuals** to provide clear classroom rules e.g. good listening, take turns, etc.
- **Barrier and rule based games** develop communication skills e.g. listening to others, taking turns and sharing information
- **Role play activities** that focus on recognising verbal and non-verbal language

When to Seek Help

It is really important to share your concerns with the relevant people, teachers and the other professionals on site.

Please remember we are to help!

Follow the instructions...

Action Plan

At home, I will use the following strategies in at least one activity everyday:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____



Mind Maps

Mind Maps are practical tools that can be used to teach vocabulary, concepts, and different topics. They can use letters, numbers, colours, shapes and pictures, and they can target a range of subjects and ideas.

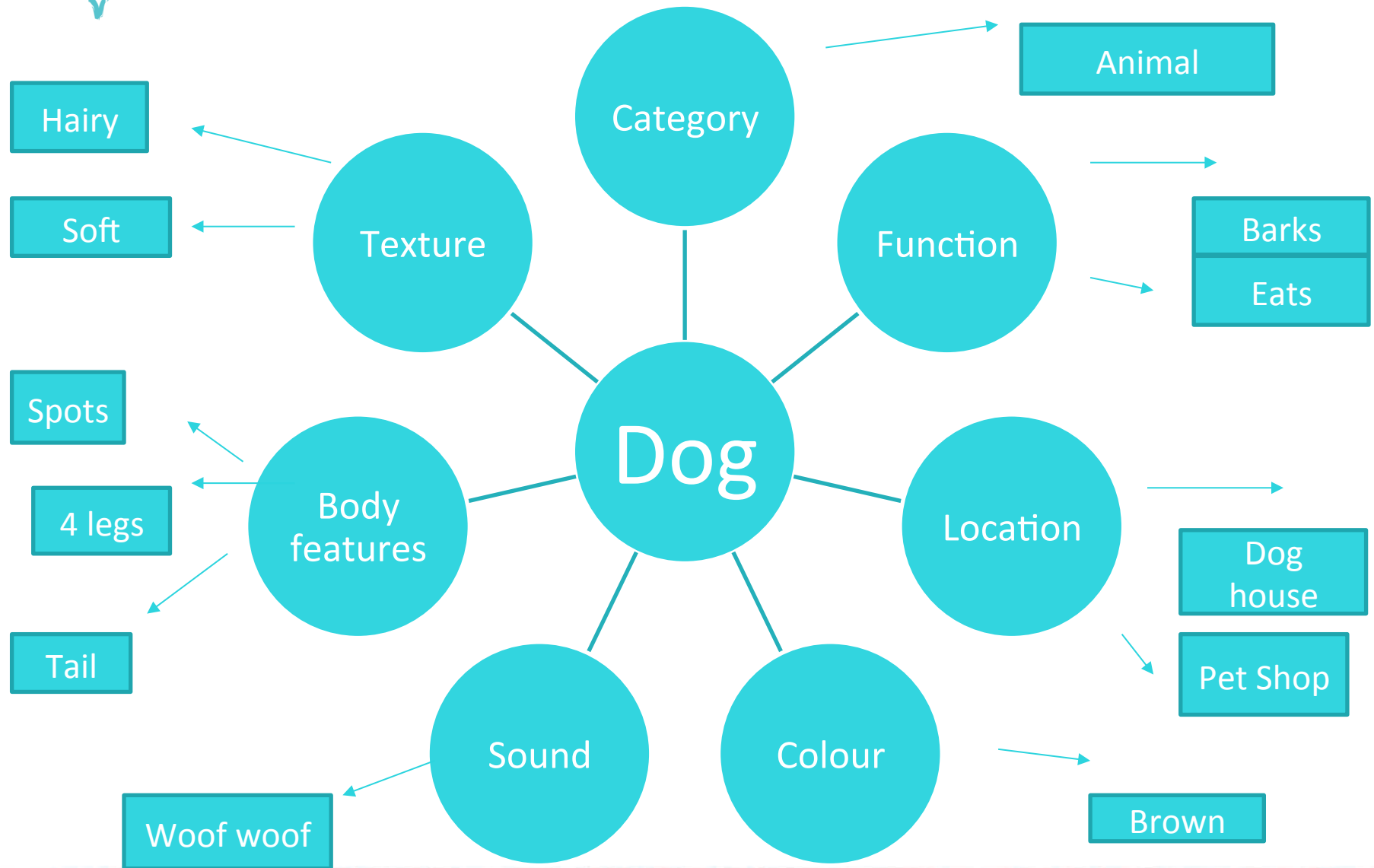
There are simple **Mind Maps** and more complex **Mind Maps**. They generally use a combination of colour-coded lines/ arrows, and either text and/or pictures. They are usually structured in the following manner:

- The subject/ topic is represented in the centre, by either text or an image
- The main themes of the subject/ topic radiate from the central text/ image with the help of lines/ arrows, forming branches
- Minor themes are linked to the main themes
- All the branches are connected

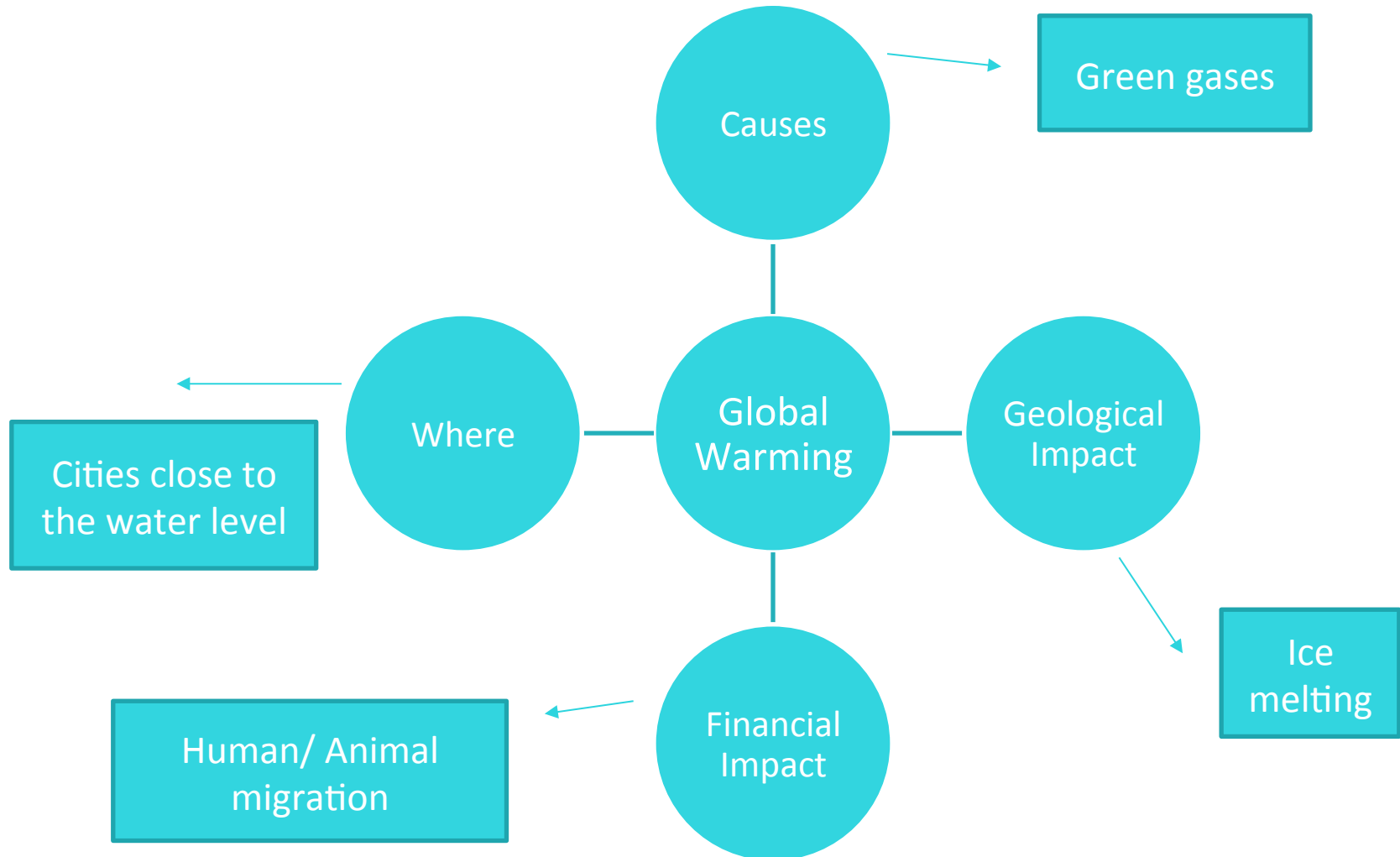
What materials are needed to create a **Mind Map**?

Pens and/or pencils/ Blank piece of paper or black/ white board/ Chalk/ White board pens/
Post-it notes/ stickers/ Pictures

Mind Maps



Mind Maps



Story Grammar Marker (SGM) Tool

Tips:

- Draw your child's attention to the visual reminders next to each narrative element
- Include target vocabulary such as 'suddenly' in the 'Kick Off' and 'decided' in the 'Plan'
- Draw the visuals on a piece of paper as you go. It's more motivating and it helps with their focus!
- Single pictures and/or stories from memory may be more challenging to break down/recall. To facilitate the breaking down of information, use a sequence of pictures. This helps children identify the main idea and it may help them predict/ problem solve more effectively.





**Thank you from the
SALT Team**