

Talk It Out: Programming a Fun Conversation

30 minutes

Adventures in Digital Creation

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

In this lesson, teachers will guide students through a fun exploration of animal sounds, teaching them how to record and attach these sounds to characters in Scratch Jr. Students will then be challenged to create a classroom scene, recording dialogue between characters and using the 'wait' function to simulate a real conversation. The lesson concludes with time for students to experiment and get creative with their projects.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Identify and replicate various animal sounds.
- Record and attach sounds to characters in Scratch Jr.
- Create a classroom scene with multiple characters in Scratch Jr.
- Record and sequence dialogue between characters.
- Apply the 'wait' function to control timing of dialogue.
- Experiment with different scenarios and character interactions in Scratch Jr.

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Devices ready with Scratch Jr. installed and open, one per pupil or per pair.
- Sound on, and check the microphone records and plays back on at least a few devices before you start.
- Headphones help if several pupils record at once, otherwise the room gets loud fast.
- Know where the microphone icon sits in the green Sound blocks and where the Wait block sits in the orange Control blocks, so you can point without hunting.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

Introduction

Introducing Animal Sounds

Recording Your Animal's Sound

Creating a Dialogue Scene

Recording the Teacher's Question

Recording the Student's Answer

Coding the Conversation: The Wait Block

Creative Time: Experimenting with Dialogue

Wrap up

TEACHING MOVES

- 2. Introducing Animal Sounds. Keep the sound talk quick and spoken. Ask two or three animals, let pupils make the noise aloud, then move on. This is a hook, not a lesson in itself.
- 3. Recording Your Animal's Sound. Model the record button live on the board first: tap microphone, record, stop, listen back. Show them the stop step clearly, as many hold it down the whole time and get silence.
- 4. Creating a Dialogue Scene. Steer most pupils to a library background rather than drawing one, so painting a classroom does not eat the recording time. Offer the paint tool only to those already ahead.
- 5. Recording the Teacher's Question. Insist on short and clear. A one-line question like 'What is 1 plus 1?' records cleanly; long sentences trail off. Attach the green flag to the teacher's play sound block together.
- 6. Recording the Student's Answer. Stress that the student character gets no green flag yet. Have them record the answer and leave that block loose, so the timing fix in the next step makes sense.
- 7. Coding the Conversation: The Wait Block. Press the green flag first so both lines fire at once. Let pupils hear the clash, then introduce Wait as the fix. The problem must come before the block.
- 8. Creative Time: Experimenting with Dialogue. Let them change the words freely. For a third character, ask how much longer its Wait needs to be so it speaks after the first two, not over them.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Pupils think a longer recording means holding the record button down, so they get one long silent or garbled clip. Model tap to start, speak, tap to stop as three separate actions, and have them listen back straight away to catch it.
- Pupils expect the Wait block to hold the teacher back, when it is the student who must wait for the question to finish. Talk it through as a real conversation: the teacher speaks first with the green flag, the student needs a pause before replying. Put the Wait on the student's code only.
- Pupils assume both characters run in order just because their blocks sit near each other. Show that each character runs its own code at the same moment. Timing between characters comes only from the Wait block, not from position on screen.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Emerging: Pre-load one library background and one added character so they start at the recording, not the setup. Record the teacher's line with them, then let them do the student's line alone.
- Developing: Have them press the green flag before and after adding Wait and tell you what changed, to check they see what the block does. Ask them to say the timing back: who speaks first, who waits, and why.
- Proficient: Add the third character and set its Wait so it chimes in after the first two finish. Challenge them to build a three-line exchange, a question, an answer and a reply, all timed with Wait blocks.