

# Unlocking Every Voice

A Practical Guide to the Think-Pair-Share-Square  
Framework for Deeper Classroom Engagement



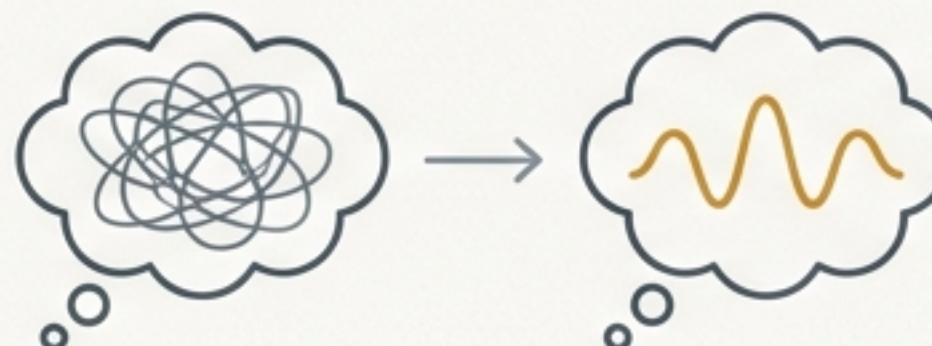
# The Persistent Challenge of Classroom Participation



How do we ensure every pupil is thinking,  
not just the fastest processors?

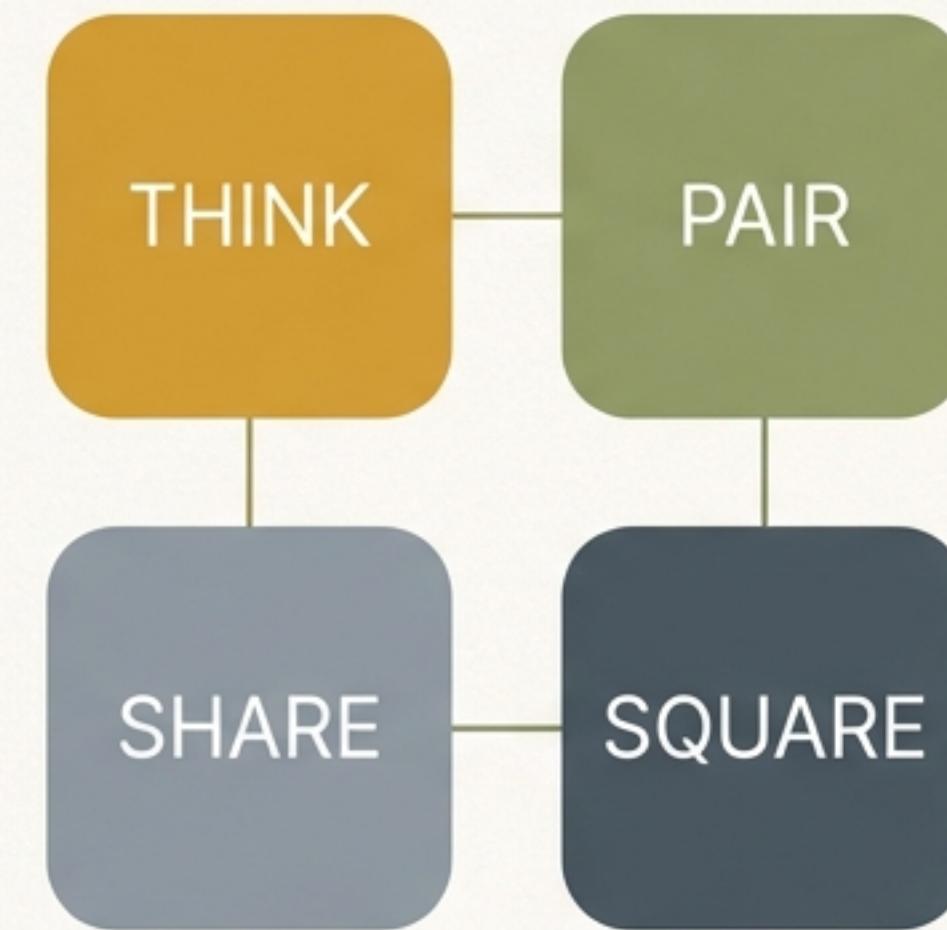


How do we move beyond the same few  
hands always going up?



How do we improve the quality of answers  
before they are shared with the whole class?

# A Solution: The Think-Pair-Share-Square Framework



A routine of structured talk designed to improve the quality of answers and increase participation from every pupil.

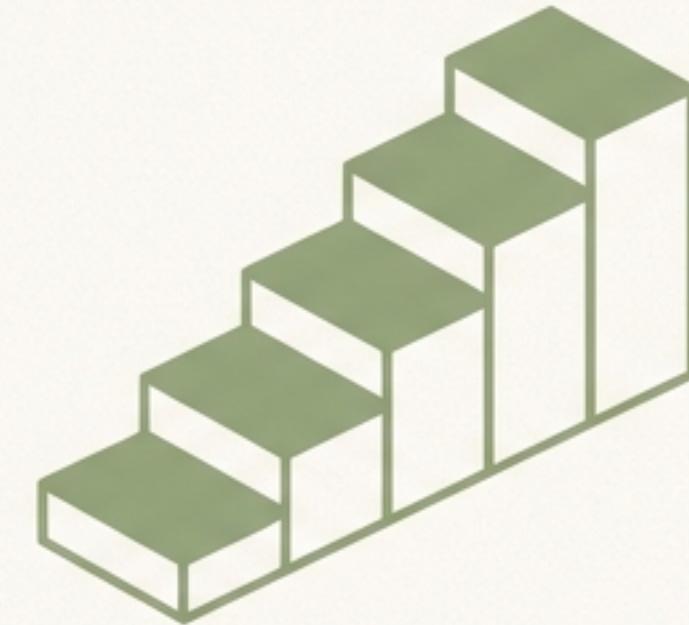
*This is not just another group work activity; it is a deliberate, scaffolded process.*

# The Evidence for Structured Talk



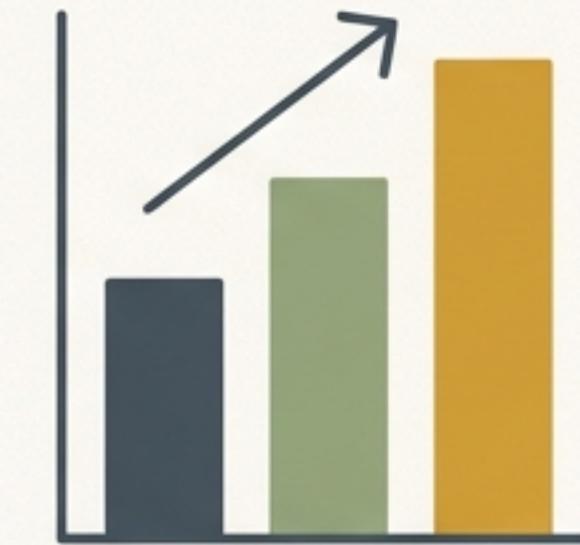
## Deeper Thinking & Rehearsal

Increases the amount of silent, focused thinking time and allows pupils to rehearse their ideas in a low-stakes environment.



## Scaffolds for All Learners

Explicitly supports EAL and SEND pupils by providing structured opportunities for talk and listening before public contribution.



## Higher Quality Contributions

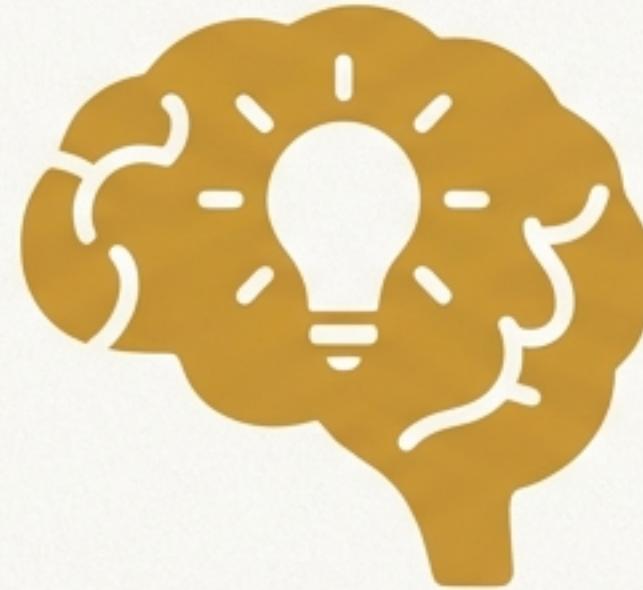
Systematically improves the quality and confidence of answers before they are shared with the whole class.

# The Four Stages of the Routine



*Each stage is deliberately timed and scripted to maximise impact.*

# **Stage 1: THINK**



## **The Action:**

Pupils think silently about a prompt. No talking is permitted.

## **The Rationale:**

This silent, timed period ensures that everyone has processing time, not just the quickest thinkers.

**“Think silently for 10 seconds. No talking.”**

## **Stage 2: PAIR**



### **The Action:**

Pupils turn to a partner. Person A speaks for a set time while Person B listens, then they swap roles.

### **The Rationale:**

This provides a safe space for initial rehearsal and forces active listening from both partners.

**“Person A: 20 seconds.  
Person B: listen only. Swap.”**

# Stage 3: SHARE



## The Action:

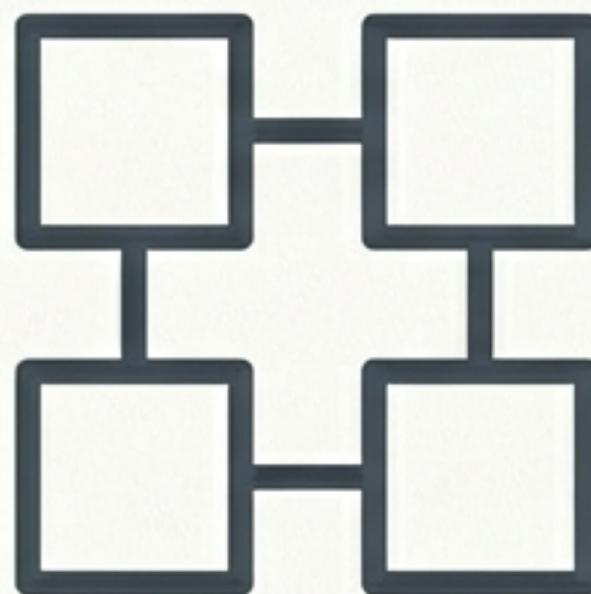
The teacher selects specific pupils or pairs to share the ideas they discussed.

## The Rationale:

Using targeted selection (like cold calling) ensures all pairs are ready to contribute, increasing accountability.

**“I’m going to cold call a pair—be ready.”**

# Stage 4: SQUARE



## The Action:

Two pairs join to form a group of four. Their task is to synthesise their ideas and agree on the best combined answer.

## The Rationale:

This stage promotes higher-order thinking skills like evaluation, synthesis, and justification.

**The Script: “Now square up: agree one best answer and one reason.”**

# Elevating the Framework: Add More Structure

To maximise the impact of the routine, provide pupils with clearer scaffolds for their thinking and discussion. Consider these additions:



## Provide Sentence Stems

Offer specific sentence starters to guide academic language (e.g., "I agree with... because...", "An alternative perspective is...").



## Provide Success Criteria

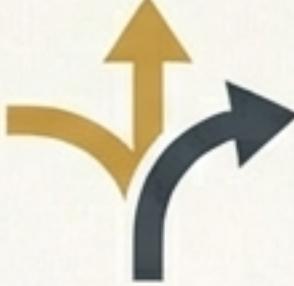
Give pupils a clear checklist of what a high-quality answer looks like.



## Give Pupils a Role

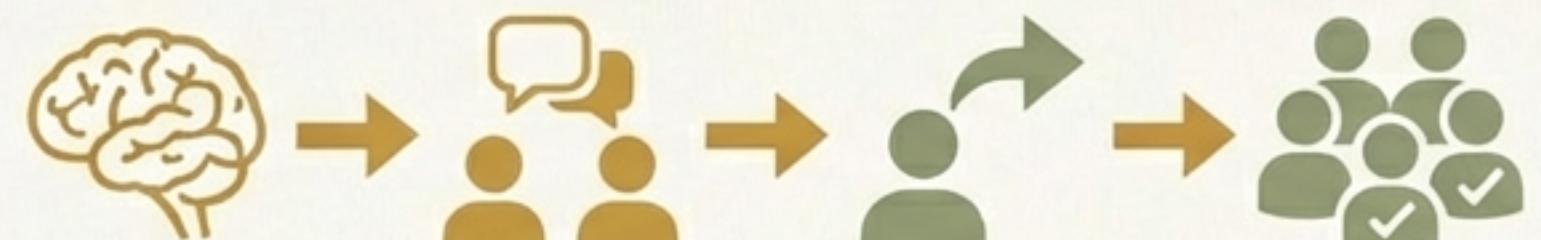
Assign specific roles within the 'Square' (e.g., Summariser, Challenger, Evidence Finder) to ensure focused collaboration.

# Ensuring Success: How to Avoid Common Pitfalls

<b>Problem</b>	 Talk drifts off-topic.	 Only confident pupils speak.	 Talk lacks a clear purpose.
<b>Source of Problem</b>	No timer.	No accountability.	No output requirement.
<b>Solution</b>	Use a visible timer for every stage to maintain pace and focus. 	Use cold calling in the 'Share' phase to ensure everyone is prepared. 	Always demand a specific, tangible output (e.g., "one best answer," "a summary sentence"). 

# The Think-Pair-Share-Square Routine at a Glance

## The Routine



### Think

Silent,  
timed.

### Pair

A speaks, B  
listens;  
swap.

### Share

Teacher  
selects.

### Square

Pairs merge;  
agree best  
answer.

## Key Scripts

- “Think silently for 10 seconds. No talking.”
- “Person A: 20 seconds. Person B: listen only. Swap.”
- “I’m going to cold call a pair—be ready.”
- “Now square up: agree one best answer and one reason.”

## Pro-Tips

- Provide Sentence Stems
- Provide Success Criteria
- Give Pupils Roles

## Must-Dos

- Use a visible timer.
- Use accountability (e.g., cold calling).
- Require a tangible output.