

A Guide to Student Voice in Primary PE



A resource developed by the GROW VOICE team in collaboration with the IPPEA, and funded by the IRC New Foundations award 2023.



Irish Primary PE Association
Cumann Corpoideachais Bunscoile na hÉireann



IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thalghde in Éirinn

Welcome!

This resource presents step-by-step direction on how to access children's voices in primary physical education (PE). Stories from children and teachers in Irish classrooms are shared as examples to give you a sense of what is possible. In addition, printable templates are included to help teachers in getting started with student voice in their classroom.

We hope this resource provides you with guidance and inspiration to use student voice in primary PE.

The GROW Voice Team

Student Voice

Student voice is a mechanism which requires intentional opportunities for students to authentically contribute to their experiences and preferences for the purpose of authoring or co-authoring their own and others' learning experiences (Iannucci & Parker, 2022). It requires that children's voices are listened to and responded to in ways that are visible to them. By consistently inviting children to share their opinions and ideas, and by listening and responding as a teacher, trust is built, and children come to realise that their voice is valued.

Student voice has many benefits for children, including:

- Increased engagement
- Ownership of learning: Opportunities to shape their learning makes the experience more effective and what they learn, more relevant.
- Supporting expression of views: Children find their voice by using it, so they need to be given time and practice to learn how to use their voice.



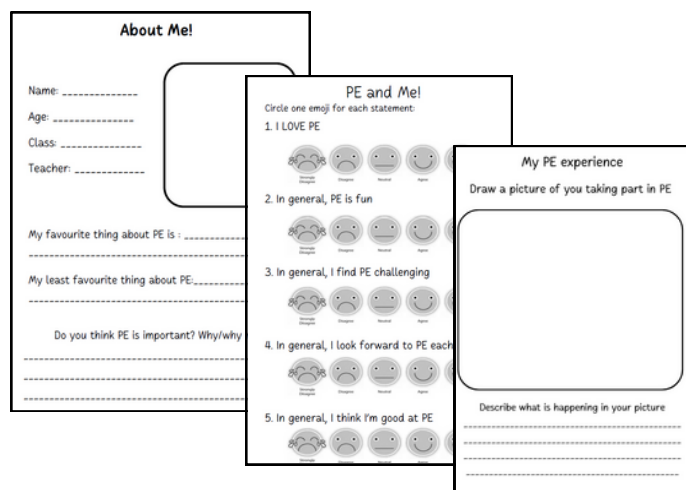


STEP 1

Understanding children's interests and attitudes to PE & Sport

Understanding how children currently experience PE is a valuable starting point for student voice. In every class there will be a range of preferences related to participation. Some children might be very active outside school, in both informal and formal sports settings. Sometimes, children can bring expectations from participation elsewhere to PE in ways that are unhelpful. Begin by discussing students' current experiences and expectations in PE, helping to guide initial conversations. Through discussion, it's important to clarify that student voice does not mean children will get everything they want or that every suggestion can be implemented. Rather, it's helpful to establish that PE is a collective effort, where all perspectives are considered, and decision-making is shared.

Templates 1 -3 can be used as a guide for initial discussions with children.



About Me!

Name: _____
Age: _____
Class: _____
Teacher: _____

My favourite thing about PE is: _____
My least favourite thing about PE: _____
Do you think PE is important? Why/why not? _____

PE and Me!

Circle one emoji for each statement:

1. I LOVE PE
[Sad face] [Neutral face] [Happy face]
2. In general, PE is fun
[Sad face] [Neutral face] [Happy face]
3. In general, I find PE challenging
[Sad face] [Neutral face] [Happy face]
4. In general, I look forward to PE each week
[Sad face] [Neutral face] [Happy face]
5. In general, I think I'm good at PE
[Sad face] [Neutral face] [Happy face]

My PE experience

Draw a picture of you taking part in PE

Describe what is happening in your picture

Template Samples

About Me!

Name: _____

Age: 11 _____

Class: 5th _____

Teacher: Molly _____



My favourite thing about PE is : Dodgeball, Basketball, Volleyball and the games. _____

My least favourite thing about PE is: Football, Rugby and Irish dancing. _____

Do you think PE is important? Why/why not?

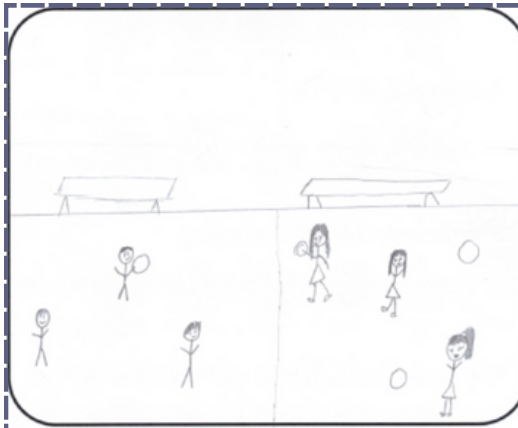
Yes it is important because we need time off work and we need to have some fun and physical activity. _____

Template 1: About Me!



Describe what is happening in your picture

I'm scoring a hatrick. _____



Describe what is happening in your picture

Its 'Girls VS Boys' in Dodgeball _____

Template 3: My PE Experience



STEP 2

Exploring children's expectations for PE

Student voice requires children and the teacher to have a shared understanding of how to engage respectfully with one another. For students to feel encouraged to express themselves constructively, it's essential that they both listen and feel listened to. Setting expectations and establishing guidelines for how student voice will operate supports a smooth integration of student voice within PE. Children need to understand the behaviours that will help their teacher listen and respond effectively to their ideas.

The templates below offer support on establishing expectations and expectations in the classroom:

PE Expectations
• Read the expectations below. Which ones do you think are the most important? • With your partner, underline/circle the 5 that you think are most important!
1. Respect everyone and everything 2. Speak kindly 3. Be helpful and responsible 4. Take care of school property 5. Try your best 6. Listen to others 7. Include everyone 8. Always challenge yourself 9. Listen to the teacher 10. Have fun! 11. Share your opinions in a respectful way 12. Lend a helping hand

Template 4: PE Expectations

Our PE Contract
With your class, decide on the 3 most important expectations or rules for PE. Use examples from the previous page or come up with your own. Write them below!

Template 5: Our PE Contract

Making Decisions		
During PE, you will be making decisions to help make the lesson work better for you. Read the statements below. Circle the "good" decisions. Draw an X through the "bad" decisions. Are there any of the statements that could be both good and bad?		
Not listening when others are speaking	Choosing to challenge myself rather than work on skills I can already do	Always choosing to be in a group/team with my friends
Helping to tidy up/put away equipment	Using free time in PE to chat with my friends	Interrupting someone to share my idea
Choosing to be in a team/group with people I don't usually work with	Putting up my hand to share my idea/opinion	Roaring or saying "Hoover!" when I don't like someone's idea
Using free time to work on a skill that I need to work on	Being really competitive in all games and activities	Asking someone to be in my group when I see they are on their own
Voting for an activity that I really want to do	Voting for an activity that I know my friends really want to do	Choosing the easiest way to complete an activity

Template 6: Making Decision

'Our PE Contract' Samples

1. Have fun and try your best.
2. Listen to your teacher and classmates.
3. Include everyone and work together.

PE Rules ~ 0

1. Respect everyone and everything
2. Include and treat everyone equally
3. Try your best and have fun.

It has to be Fair.

Everyone has a say in what to do.

It includes teamwork.

STEP 3

Getting Feedback

Asking children about their experiences in PE is the best way to figure out what is working for them. Within the spirit of student voice, children have a responsibility to be reasonable and measured in their responses, being helpful rather than critical. Some prompts which may help students in giving constructive feedback include:

- "Ask questions to make sure you understand the learning focus"
- "Think carefully about the learning focus and how your suggestions might help"
- "Be kind. And constructive. Be specific about what improvements can be made"
- "Share honestly what worked and what didn't, keeping others in mind"
- "Be a good team member and pull with your teacher, not against"

PE Feedback Form	
Think about your PE lesson this week, and respond to the statements below.	
Colour the stars in response to each statement below	
I felt like I was listened to in PE today	☆☆☆☆
I got a chance to share my opinions and ideas	☆☆☆☆
I felt comfortable sharing my ideas and giving my opinions	☆☆☆☆
I had enough time to talk	☆☆☆☆
I think my opinions/ideas were taken seriously	☆☆☆☆
I had enough information about the lesson to form my opinion	☆☆☆☆
Is there anything else that your teacher could have done to share your ideas and opinions?	

What I Think & What Others Say

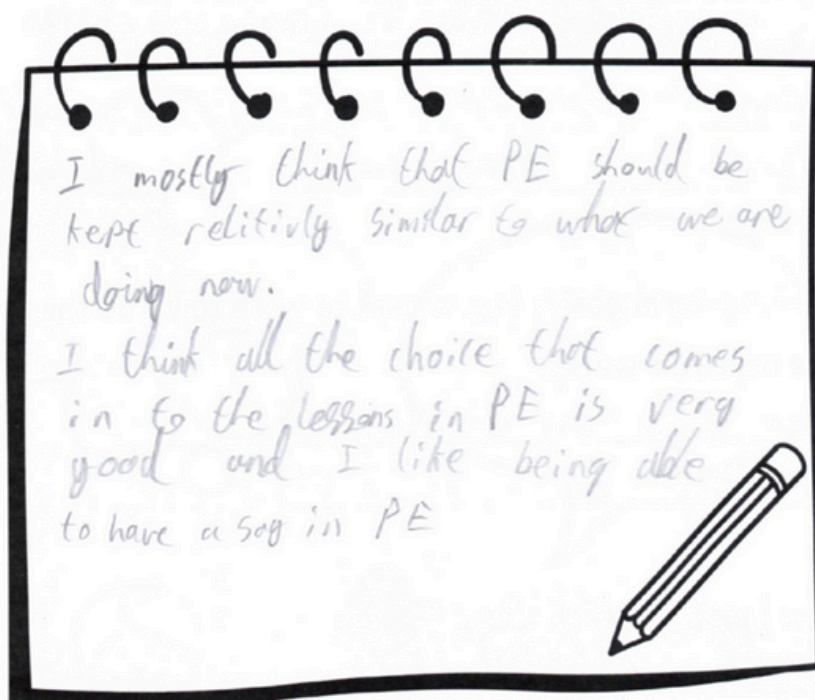
Sometimes what you're thinking and what others are saying are not the same.



Write about a time when your opinion/idea was different from your classmates.

See Templates 7 - 10 for additional support:
Template 7: PE Feedback Form
Template 8: Letter to my Teacher
Template 9: What I Think & What Others Say
Template 10: What I Think & What I Say

Template Samples



Template 8: Letter to my Teacher



Template 10: What I Think & What I Say



STEP 4

Responding & Making Changes

Children need to see that the teacher has listened to their perspectives and suggestions. It is not always possible to action every idea, but it is still important to acknowledge children's contributions and to explain how they are influencing decision-making. Sometimes, presenting all the children's ideas to the whole class is a good way to collectively figure out what is possible to change and the next steps to take. Checking in about how children are finding the processes of student voice is important too. Some children may take longer to find their voices and reflecting on their experiences might be important to help them see how their sharing made a difference to what happened in PE.

See templates below for additional reflection prompts:

Template 11: Sharing my thoughts

Template 12: My Achievements in PE

Template 13: End of term reflection

Template 14: My PE experience now...

Template 15: Certificate of Achievement

Template 16: Exit Tickets

Sharing my Thoughts	
Sharing my opinions and ideas in PE helped me to	
Sharing my opinions and my teacher to	
Did sharing your thought to your PE experience? !	

Certificate of Achievement	
NAME:	
Congratulations to me! In PE this term I have earned this certificate by:	
Trying hard:	
Achievement:	

Template Sample



In PE this year, I succeeded at:

sports I do not play

I am most proud of myself for:

talking in front of people

I can connect PE to my life because:

I play lots of sports and do lots of things

Template 12: My Achievements in PE

A decorative border surrounds the page, consisting of horizontal bars at the top and bottom, and vertical bars on the left and right sides. The bars are colored in a repeating sequence of red, yellow, green, blue, and purple.

Printable Templates

Template 1

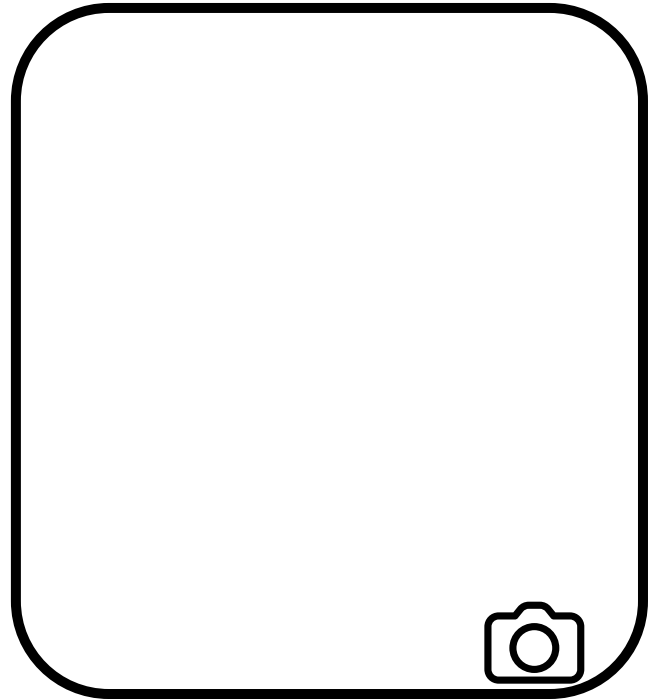
About Me!

Name: _____

Age: _____

Class: _____

Teacher: _____



My favourite thing about PE is : _____

My least favourite thing about PE is: _____

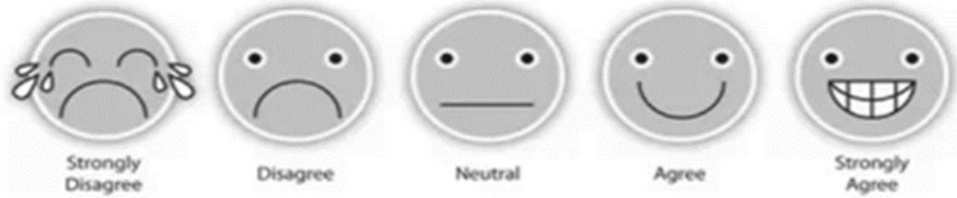
Do you think PE is important? Why/why not?

Template 2

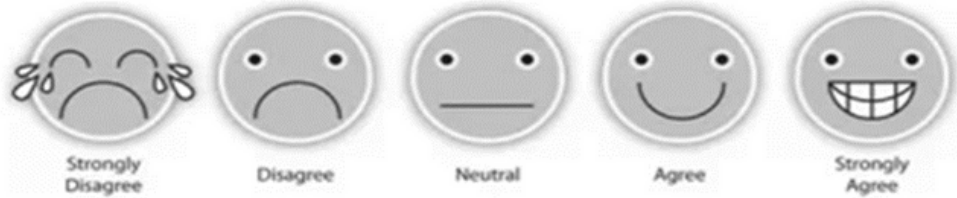
PE and Me!

Circle one emoji for each statement:

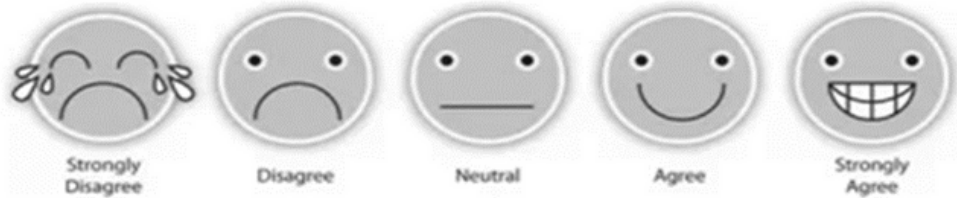
1. I LOVE PE



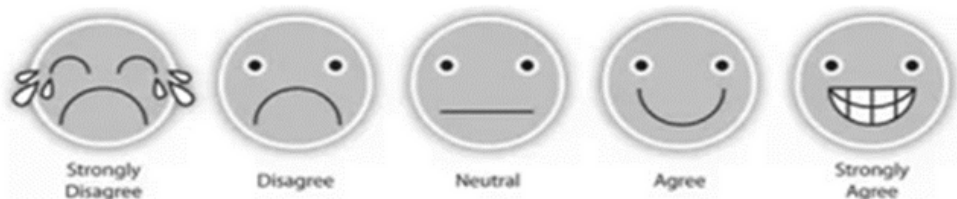
2. In general, PE is fun



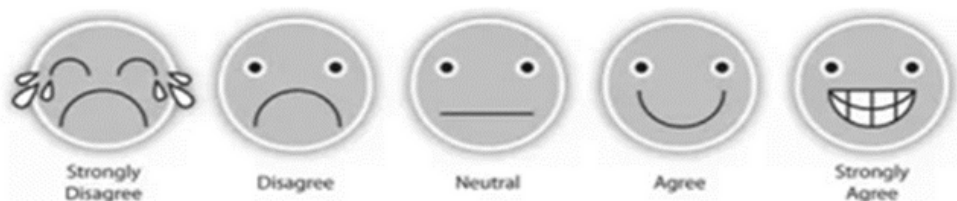
3. In general, I find PE challenging



4. In general, I look forward to PE each week



5. In general, I think I'm good at PE



My PE Experience

Draw a picture of you taking part in PE

Describe what is happening in your picture

PE Expectations

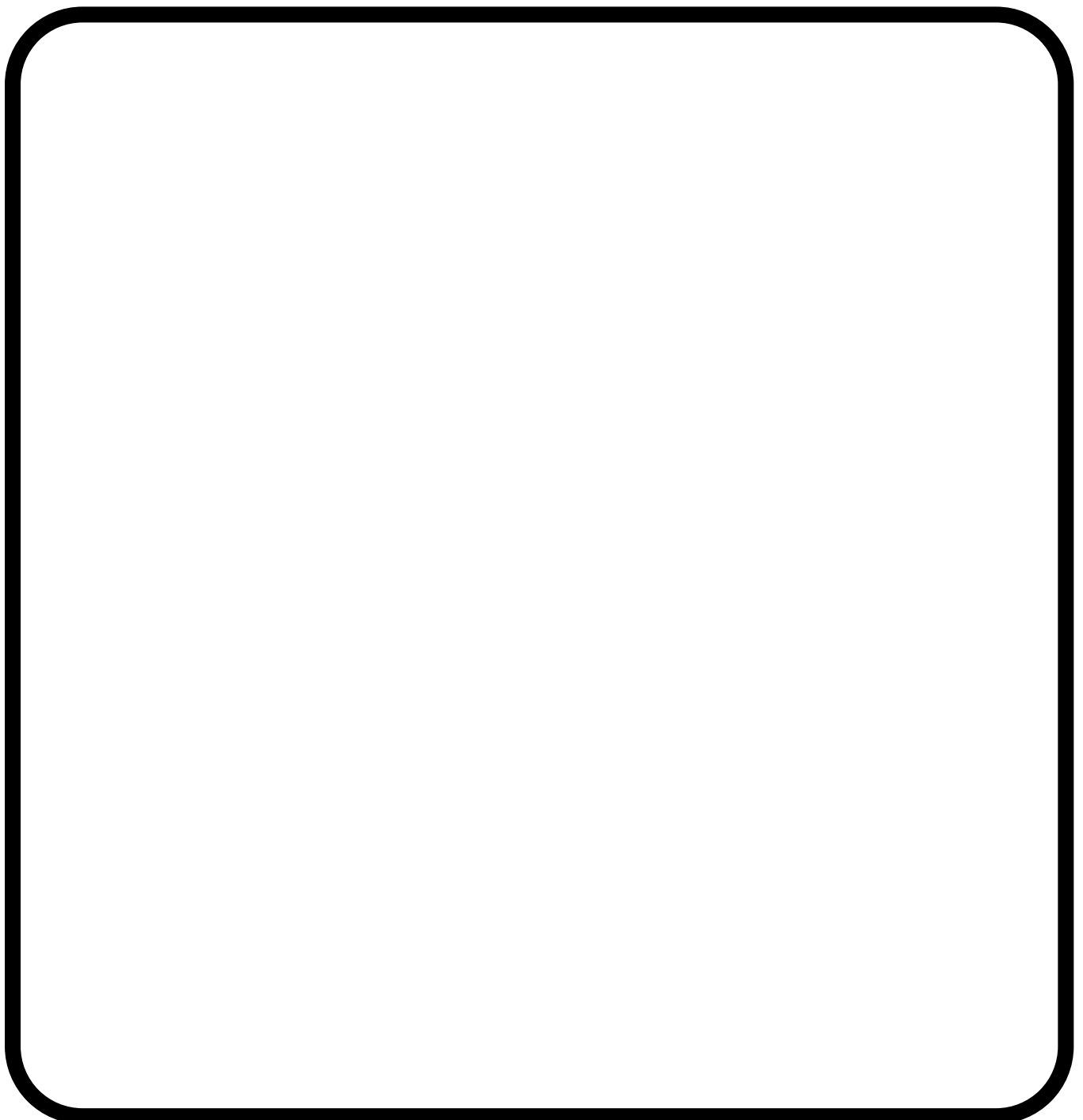
- Read the expectations below. Which ones do you think are the most important?
- With your partner, underline/circle the 5 that you think are most important!

1. Respect everyone and everything
2. Speak kindly
3. Be helpful and responsible
4. Take care of school property
5. Try your best
6. Listen to others
7. Include everyone
8. Always challenge yourself
9. Listen to the teacher
10. Have fun!
11. Share your opinions in a respectful way
12. Lend a helping hand

Our PE Contract

With your class, decide on the 3 most important expectations or rules for PE. Use examples from the previous page or come up with your own.

Write them below!



Template 6

Making Decisions

During PE, you will be making decisions to help make the lesson work better for you.

Read the statements below. Circle the “good” decisions. Draw an X through the “bad” decisions. Are there any of the statements that could be both good and bad?

Not listening when others are speaking	Choosing to challenge myself rather than work on skills I can already do	Always choosing to be in a group/team with my friends
Helping to tidy up/put away equipment	Using free time in PE to chat with my friends	Interrupting someone to share my idea
Choosing to be in a team/group with people I don't usually work with	Putting up my hand to share my idea/opinion	Moaning or saying “Nooooooo” when I don't like someone's idea
Using free time to work on a skill that I need to work on	Being really competitive in all games and activities	Asking someone to be in my group when I see they are on their own
Voting for an activity that I really want to do	Voting for an activity that I know my friends really want to do	Choosing the easiest way to complete an activity

Template 7

PE Feedback Form

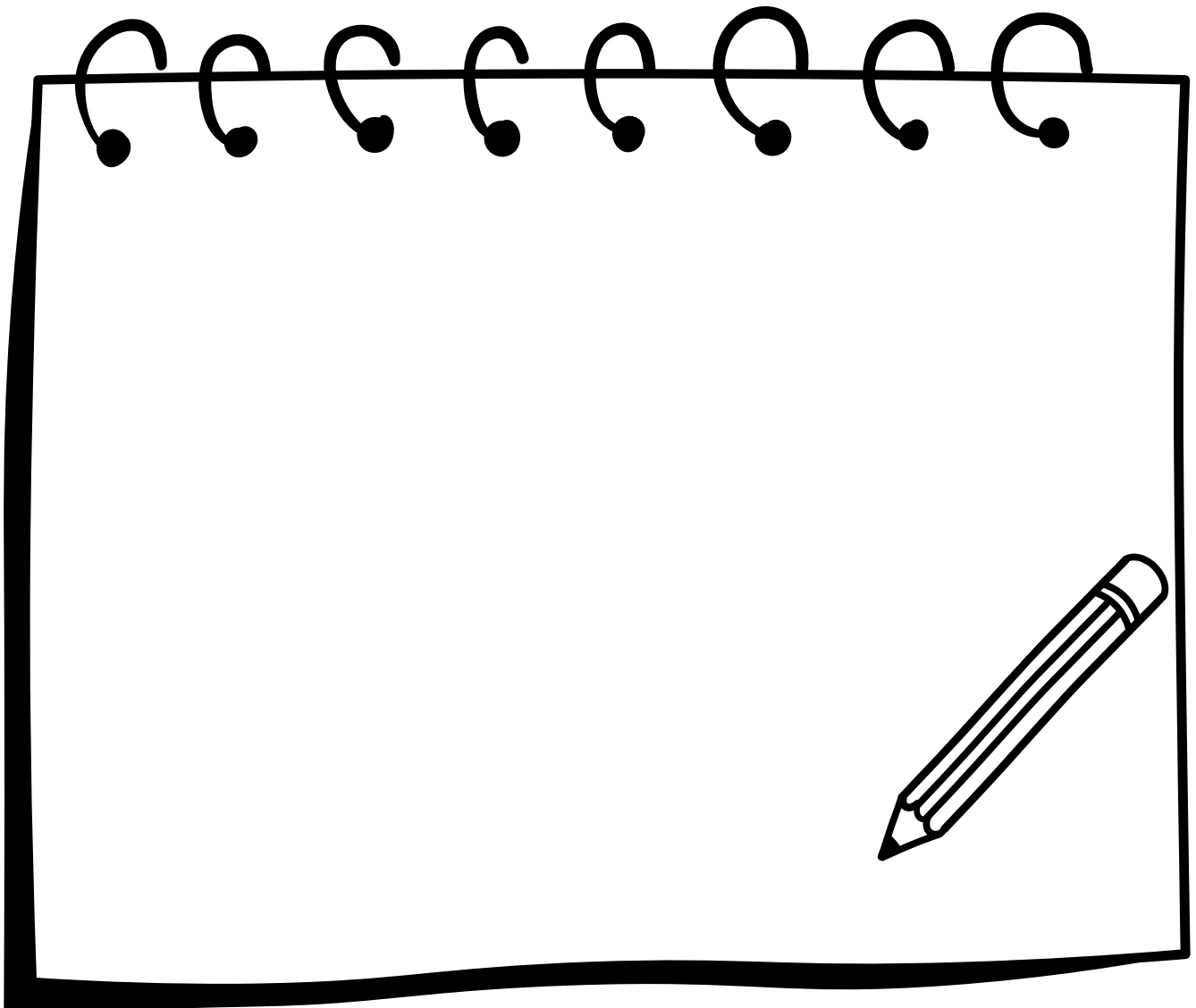
Think about your PE lesson this week, and respond to the statements below.

Colour the stars in response to each statement below	
I felt like I was listened to in PE today	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
I got a chance to share my opinions and ideas	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
I felt comfortable sharing my ideas and giving my opinions	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
I had enough time to talk	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
I think my opinions/ideas were taken seriously	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
I had enough information about the lesson to form my opinion	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Is there anything else that your teacher could have done to help you to share your ideas and opinions? ----- ----- -----	

Template 8

Letter to my Teacher

Think about how PE is going so far.
What do you want your teacher to know?



- Think about what is working for you in PE, or what is not working.
- Is there something that you think your teacher should change?
- Is there anything that you think your teacher should keep doing?

What I Think & What Others Say

Sometimes what you're thinking and what others are saying are not the same.



Write about a time when your opinion/idea was different from your classmates.

What I Think & What I Say

Sometimes you may not want to share your thoughts in front of the class, and what you say out loud may be different from what you are thinking. Write about a time this has happened before.



Sharing my Thoughts

Sharing my opinions and ideas in PE helped me to _____

Sharing my opinions and ideas in PE helped my teacher to _____

Did sharing your thoughts make a difference to your PE experience? Explain.



Template 12



In PE this term, I succeeded at:

I am most proud of myself for:

I can connect PE to my life because:

End of Term Reflection

Did having a say make a difference to my PE experience? (Circle one) Yes No

My favourite part of PE this term:

Sometimes my teacher asked for my opinions/ideas. This made a difference because:

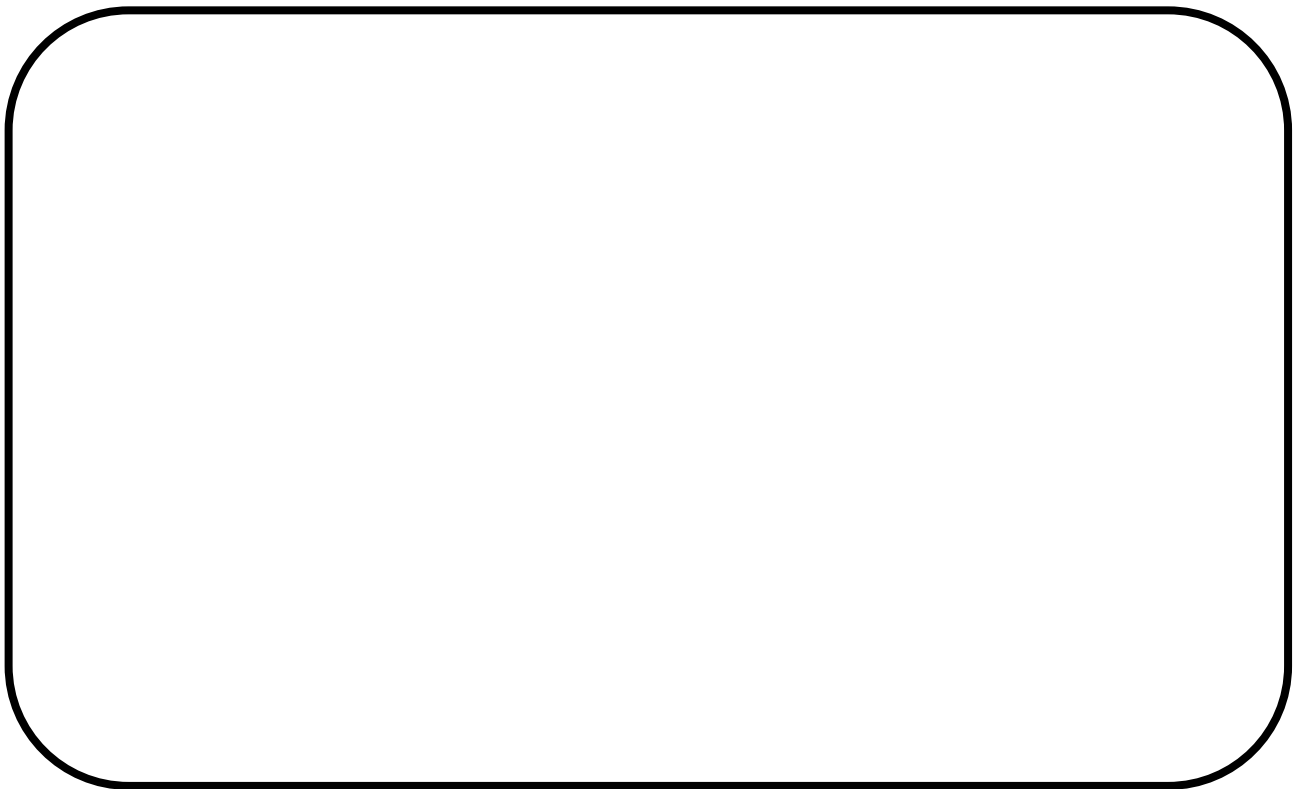
Next term in PE, I hope:

My advice for my teacher:

Template 14

My PE experience now...

Since your teacher started using student voice in PE, how has how you participate in PE changed? Draw a picture of you taking part in a recent PE lesson



Describe what is happening in the picture:

In my opinion, the most important part of PE is:

Certificate of Achievement

NAME:

Congratulations to me!

In PE this term I have earned this certificate by:

Trying hard:

Achievement:

Exit Tickets

Describe one thing that worked for you in PE today:

Date: -----

Topic: -----

Describe one thing that you would change about PE today: -----

Date: -----

Topic: -----

One thing I would like to remember for the next PE lesson is: -----

Date: -----

Topic: -----

Exit Tickets

Describe how you challenged yourself in PE today:

Date: -----

Topic: -----

What can you do differently next week to make PE even better for you: -----

Date: -----

Topic: -----

If I was the teacher, PE would look like:

Date: -----

Topic: -----



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