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Developing Vocabulary Skills: Bridging Evidence to Practice

Presented by Buckinghamshire Children and Young
People's Speech and Language Therapy Team

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What we will cover

- What do we mean by 'vocabulary' and why is vocabulary important?
- A child's vocabulary learning journey
- Vocabulary difficulties and how these may present
- Supporting vocabulary development across the curriculum

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Our choice of words can help us to...

Connect	Diffuse a situation	Entertain
Influence	Hurt or offend	Show we care

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So, what exactly is a word...?

- Meaning (semantic)
- Sound (Phonological)
- Orthographic (visual/written)

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Word learning in the Early Years

- Initially, children need to hear a word between 50 and 200 times before they learn to understand what it means and use it
- From 18 months children undergo a vocabulary spurt where they learn new words at a much quicker pace ('fast mapping') (Clark, 1993)

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Typical vocabulary development over time


Number and complexity of words known

Early years Concrete, relate to here and now Developing knowledge of nouns, verbs, adjectives	School age Words with multiple meanings Metacognitive words – "thinking" words e.g. "remember"	Adolescence Subject vocabulary – more technical and abstract words Slang, figurative language
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Sources: Nippold, 2016
ICAN Talk Series – Issue 10

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
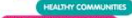

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Depth of word knowledge

- Stage 1: Never heard of it before
- Stage 2: Heard of it, but don't know what it means
- Stage 3: I recognise it in context, it has something to do with...
- Stage 4: I know this word

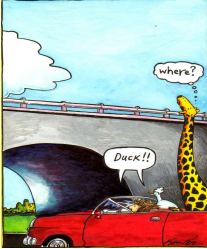
Consider above in relation to these words: *Haulm, fluvial, magma, colitis, Labrador*








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A closer look at the complexity of words...










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Multiple meanings




run


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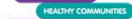





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Summary

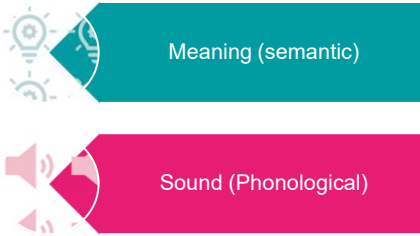
- Word knowledge is made up of meaning, sound and written features
- Vocabulary develops over time
- Word learning can be a complex process!


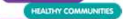





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When word learning breaks down



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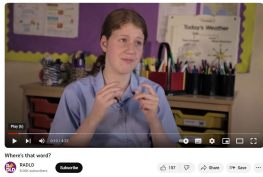
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Word finding difficulties

'I know the word but I just can't remember it!'

Youtube video:

'Where's that word?'
(RADLD)



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= y7TJ7Th8cY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7TJ7Th8cY)

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Who has vocabulary or word finding difficulties?


- Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- Children with persisting language difficulties (e.g. Language Disorder associated with other conditions such as Autism, Developmental Language Disorder)
- Other developmental profiles: Dyslexia, Intellectual Disability, Speech Sound Disorder

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What is the impact of having vocabulary difficulties?



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Introduction to teaching vocabulary

- There is a growing body of evidence into vocabulary interventions, with positive effects seen across different settings and delivered by teachers, TAs and Speech and Language Therapists.
- Approaches that focus on both the sound and meaning elements of words are reported to be most effective.

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Choosing the right words

Year 4 Geography topic: Which words would you focus on? Why?

Arctic circle, biome, city, climate, country, desert, earthquake, environment, global, hemisphere, location, map, minerals, mountains, region, river, significance, topographical, Tropic of Capricorn, Tropic of Cancer, vegetation belt, volcano

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Choosing the right words

Anchor words	Goldilocks words	Step on words
<p>Children have a thorough understanding of these words.</p> <p>Everyday spoken and written language for a child of this age.</p> <p>Used at home and in daily interactions.</p> <p>Children have become familiar with this vocabulary through prior teaching.</p>	<p>Really useful words</p> <p>Likely to be encountered again in reading or oral language.</p> <p>Average adult has a good level of knowledge of the word.</p> <p>Words that are very topic-specific but are core to the topic.</p> <p>Age 7+: Desirable for children to use in their writing.</p>	<p>Less likely to be encountered again in reading or oral language.</p> <p>Average adult does not have much knowledge of the word.</p> <p>Words that are particularly topic-specific, and are not core to the topic.</p> <p>Age 7+: Not a word that children usually need to use in their own writing.</p>

Source: Anna Branagan and Stephen Parsons (2022), *Word Aware 3*, Routledge

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Choosing the right words

- “Command words” or words that frequently come up in exams e.g. Discuss, Analyse
- Words linked to behavioural expectations (*choice, cooperate, responsibility, inappropriate, consequence, expectations, resolve*)
- Emotion words

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Word map example 1

Word Wizard

New word **nutrients**
Spelling and word class
b, c, t It starts with 'n'

It rhymes with ... **nutrients, nutrients, nutrients**

It has **3** syllables

Say the word to your partner

Students write the word

Sentence / story **You need lots of nutrients to help you grow strong and healthy.**

Action **Planting** **Song or Rap** **Word Wall** **Word Pot**

Fruit and veg have lots of nutrients

Helps plants and animals grow

Different nutrients are in different foods

Plants get nutrients from the soil

Meaning and context

Anna Branagan and Stephen Parsons (2022), *Word Aware 3*, Routledge

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Word map example 2

Word Wizard

New word **symmetrical**
Spelling and word class
s, y, m, e, t, r, i, c, a, l It starts with 's'

Meaning: It is exactly the same on both sides. It is a mirror image.

Picture / Diagram:

Use the word in a sentence: **The pattern is symmetrical.**

Link or change the word to: **Symmetry**

The word properties: First letter? **S**
How many syllables? **4**
Long or short vowel? **4 short vowels**

Ebbels et al, 2022

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Worked word map

Word Wizard

New word **Evaporation**
Spelling and word class
e, v, a, p, o, r, a, t, i, o, n It starts with 'e'

It rhymes with **generation**

It has **5** syllables

Say the word to your partner

Symbol/picture:

Meaning: **process where liquid turns to gas when heated**

Use the word in a sentence: **The water in the kettle was heated and turned into steam. This process is called evaporation.**

Action **Boiling** **Song or Rap** **Word Wall** **Word Pot**

change of state

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Supporting long-term retention of vocabulary

- Helps retain words in long-term memory
- Younger students:
 - Word pot (Word Aware – Parsons and Branagan, 2022)
 - Send a copy of the words home ('Fridge words') – Parsons and Branagan (2016)
 - Word sticker 'Talk to me about...' (Parsons and Branagan, 2016)
- Older students:
 - Quizlet.com, flashcards

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Vocabulary games

- Word rounds: choose a category (e.g. animals, transport, furniture types), give a time limit
- I spy variations: Word meaning clues instead of letters ("I put on my thinking hat and think of something that is [clue]")
- Word associations
- "I went shopping and I bought..." and variations of this
- 20 questions
- Charades
- Hangman

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Source: thinkingtalking.co.uk




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Examples of targets – Vocabulary and word finding

- To be able to complete a "word web/map" relating to key vocabulary in a current or upcoming topic with adult support in a structured session, 80% of the time.
- To identify the phonological/sound properties of words e.g. syllable and rhyme in response to a picture, object or action in a structured session, 80% of the time.
- To recall 10 key words related to an upcoming class topic, and identify their category, details about sound, and class of word with 80% accuracy
- To be able to identify and demonstrate a word finding technique when presented with a scenario in a structured session, 80% of the time.











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Thank you



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