

Chatter Pack

Developing Vocabulary

Free resource

Vocabulary:

“The body of words known to an individual person.” The words which we ‘know’ in order to communicate effectively.

Education:

“The process of receiving or giving systematic instruction” Education is based on communication; therefore vocabulary, communication and education must be intrinsically linked, and one cannot thrive or result in a successful outcome without the other.

“7.6% of children have a developmental language disorder that persists throughout school and impacts on learning and on their social and emotional development; at least two pupils in every classroom”

[\(Bercow 10. Read more here\)](#)

You might be familiar with the term ‘pre-teaching vocabulary’, particularly used in relation to children and young people with SEND. This process can be vital for positive outcomes; however, it is important to first understand the complexity of the language we use, both in the way in which we construct our sentences and within the vocabulary we use.

For example: Have you considered the complexity of some of the most basic instructions we might give children as part of everyday life?

1. “Go and get your shoes before you get your coat.”
2. “Before you get your coat, get your shoes.”
3. “After you have got your shoes, go and get your coat.”
4. “Get your coat after you have got your shoes.”

All four instructions above are worded differently yet expect the same outcome. All contain a complex concept, yet two of the instructions are easier to understand. Before reading on, can you guess which they are and why? Can you think of another reason why these instructions might be more complex than others?

1. "Go and get your shoes before you get your coat."
2. "Before you get your coat, get your shoes."
3. "After you have got your shoes, go and get your coat."
4. "Get your coat after you have got your shoes."

Instructions containing 'before' and 'after' are just one example of complex language used within everyday conversation.

Sentences 1 and 3 convey the two parts of the instruction in sequence, 1) get you shoes 2) get your coat, which makes it simpler to follow. However, also take note of the positioning of the concept word. In order to convey the two parts of the instruction in sequence, you must place 'before' between the two parts of the instruction, and 'after' at the beginning of the sentence. Furthermore, by simply moving the position of the concepts within sentences 2 and 4, in order to follow the instruction accurately, the child must understand the concepts 'before' and 'after' rather than relying on the sequence of the two parts in order to follow the instruction.

In addition to the understanding and positioning of the concepts, these instructions also contain two parts. 1) Get your shoes 2) Get your coat, and this might not be appropriate for some children. Another consideration is 'context-based understanding'. For example, are you asking them to get their shoes and coat within a fixed routine? If so, are they following an instruction? Or following a routine? Are other children around them getting their shoes and coat? If they are, is the child mirroring actions rather than understanding the vocabulary you are using? Are you holding their shoes and coat? Gesturing towards them? What support are they gaining from the tone and intonation in your voice when you give the instruction?

Communication is complex and there's so much to consider, however whilst it is important to support children and young people to achieve, it is also important to recognise how they achieve in order for adults to monitor and adapt the support offered. Therefore, this resource focuses not only on developing vocabulary, but also on consideration of the level and type of vocabulary which we teach and use.

The images included within this resource focus mainly on maths related vocabulary, however, if you use your own images, the ideas below can be applied to any topic or area of vocabulary.

Top 10 tips

1. If you are at all concerned that a child might be struggling with a speech, language or communication need, no matter how 'mild' it might appear to be, seek advice and/or assessment from a speech and language therapist. It is vital that they receive the right support without delay.
2. When choosing vocabulary to teach, where possible, focus on functional language. If a child is struggling with the basics of communication, it might not be appropriate to teach them complex or topic-related vocabulary at this stage.
3. Make sure you choose the right 'level' of vocabulary and that it is not too complex. This will be individual to each child and is not age related, especially if the child has language difficulties. Monitor the 'level' by first identifying if the child knows words which you, or they might use to describe or define it? E.g. If you are teaching the word 'river' (which for some, isn't a low/basic level word), first identify if the child knows basic words such as 'water, wet, move'. If they don't, 'river' will be too tricky and words such as 'water, wet, move' are more functional and are the words which they need to be taught first.
4. Be mindful of the vocabulary you use when defining or explaining new words. For example, if you are describing the word 'river' (and you have determined that the child already understands words such as 'water, wet, move'), if the words you use to define 'river' are at the same level or at a higher level, e.g. 'flow, splash, speed, meander, travel', they won't understand the definition and it won't support their learning. [More information via an excellent tutorial video here](#) from Stephen Parsons (@WordAware)
5. Consider creating a vocabulary book with sections for various topics. Remember to have a 'social vocabulary' page too and always keep in mind how language must be 'functional'.
6. Inform all adults about the vocabulary book and have a section identified where words or phrases which the child might have struggled with during the day can be recorded.
7. Using the book: Add an image or write the word in the middle of a page and try making a 'word-web' around it. Link information such as; What is it used for? (function) Where would you find it? (location) Describe it (attributes) Rhyme it, identify the first/last sounds, clap syllables. (Phonological links)

Say/write the word in various sentences (context). You could also use your senses – what does it feel/smell/taste/smell/look/sound like?

8. When possible, pre-teach vocabulary relating to a specific lesson or topic a while before it is needed, preferably begin the term before. This will give the child the best chance at accessing the upcoming lessons and will also give them opportunities to revise, review and practice using the new vocabulary in context, which is a vital stage of learning.
9. Create a 'word wall' where newly learned vocabulary is displayed, and which you can refer children to. You could link an image to each word to aid understanding and use.
- 10 Try teaching a 'word of the day'. This can be group work or individually

Using the vocabulary images

Matching pairs game.

- Print two copies of the images, mix them up and place them face down on a table. Take turns to turn two images over to see if they match, returning them to their original place if they don't. The idea is, when you turn an image over, to try and remember where you last saw its matching pair
- Label the item each time you turn one over so the child is hearing the word repeated whilst also seeing an image to link meaning to it.
- Each time you find a matching pair, talk about it using the ideas in Tip number 5 above.

Vocabulary bingo

- Make 'bingo boards' using the images provided.
- Remember to differ which images you omit from each board. Vary the layout of the images on each board.
- Print a separate copy of the images and use these as the 'calling cards'
- Decide whether the child has to complete a line, a row, four corners or all of the board.
- Keep in mind the language used when introducing the game. Words such as 'line, row, corner' might also be new vocabulary and therefore, won't be appropriate to use.

- Place the images face down. The 'caller' selects an image at random, turns it over and labels it.
- Once the boards, lines or rows are full, ask the child to select an image (or more) to define. You could use the ideas in Tip number 5.

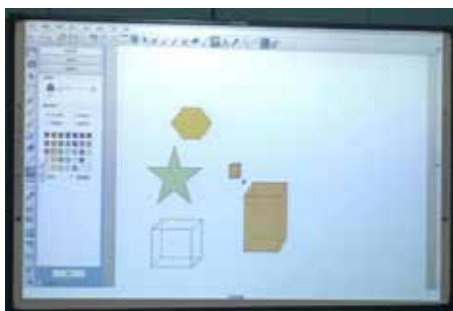
Using the maths concept cards

- Begin by identifying which of the words the child knows, which they aren't sure of and which they don't know. You could do this by asking them to sort them into 3 piles and checking by asking them to use the word in a sentence. If the child knows the word, but finds explaining it too tricky, ask them to demonstrate perhaps by drawing an example.
- If their explanation isn't clear, try to avoid inferring or adding meaning to it, or prompting them too much with suggestions. This might give the impression that they know the word when they don't, or when they need help to develop a better understanding of it.
- Once you have identified unknown words, or words which require deeper understanding or practice, work on each of the concepts in turn using the Top Tips above.
- If possible, use practical, hands-on activities. For example, if you are teaching 'more than', try using beads and placing a large amount in one bowl and a much smaller amount in another.
- Remember that children must understand the word before they can be expected to use it. Teach the concept in various situations and bring learning into everyday life as much as possible.
- If the child is struggling with a concept, make sure you are using appropriate language to explain and that you aren't teaching more than one at a time. For example, if you are teaching 'more than', rather than using 'less than' in any explanation, it might be more appropriate to teach 'more than' and 'not more than'. That way you are limiting to one concept at a time.
- Try to avoid using any other concept on the list such as, 'compare' 'total' 'estimate' 'reduce' etc.

General school vocabulary



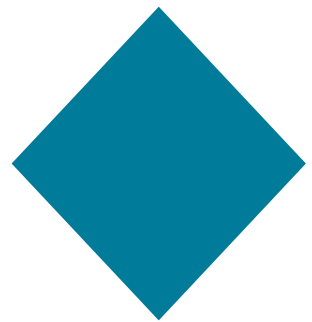
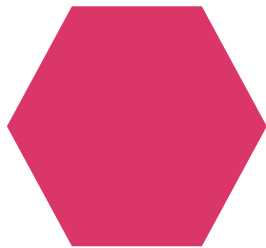
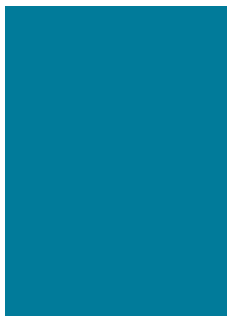
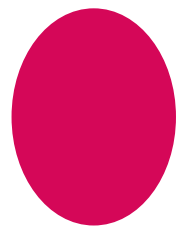
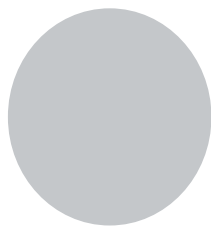
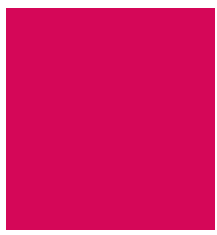
Phonics



Maths vocabulary - equipment



Maths vocabulary - symbols/shapes



Maths vocabulary - Concept Cards

more than	less than	compare	after
before	same as	equal to	greater
even	share	together	order
calculate	total	sum	reduce
increase	separate	average	product
both	double	half	triple
quarter	numerals	decimal	cumulation
split	group	subtract	remainder
combine	few	percentage	equivalent
balance	first	last	second
third	furthest	closest	positive
negative	between	middle	complete