

# Treeton C of E Primary School

## Policy for the teaching of Robust Vocabulary Instruction

Robust Vocabulary Instruction Based on Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction by Isabel L. Beck, Margaret G. McKeown, and Linda Kucan

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Subject coordinator: A Brooks

**‘A robust approach to vocabulary involves directly explaining the meanings of words along with thought provoking, playful and interactive follow up.’ (Beck, McKeown and Kucan)**

### Intent

Research shows that the size of a child’s vocabulary is a strong predictor of reading success and also for success in future tests and exams. We aim to provide three lessons a week where we explicitly teach vocabulary, raise children’s interest and motivation to develop their own vocabulary, and celebrate exploring and using ambitious word choice.

When choosing words to teach, we consider:

- Would children be able to explain these words using words that are already well known to them? (New words offer children more precise or mature ways of referring to ideas they already know about.)
- Are the words more precise or more complex forms of familiar words—not just synonyms?
- How generally useful is the word? Is it a word that children are likely to meet often in other texts? Will it be of use to children in describing their own experiences?
- How does the word relate to other words, to ideas that children know or have been learning? Does it directly relate to some topic of study in the classroom? Or might it add a dimension to ideas that have been developed?
- What does the word contribute to a text or situation? What role does the word play in communicating the meaning of the context in which it is use?

Identifying the tier of word helps us to identify the correct words to teach

There are 3 tiers of words:

**Tier 1** : Words typically found in oral language (common everyday words)

**Tier 2**: Words which are more common in written language than spoken, and used in texts to clarify meaning and further engage the reader.

**Tier 3**: Words which tend to be limited to specific themes e.g. enzyme, insulator, or those that are rarely encountered by even the more avid reader

For vocabulary instruction, we choose Tier 2 words. Tier 2 words are transferable and useful. They also play an important part in discussion as they often have multiple meanings, and they are vital in reading comprehension.

Key Features of strong vocabulary instruction include:

1. Frequent and varied encounters with target words
2. Robust instructional activities that engage students in deep processing
3. Assessment and quizzing to ensure learning is embedded.

### Implementation

In order to teach RVI, each child has three sessions a week of direct vocabulary instruction. Each word learnt is displayed in the classroom on a ‘brick’. As the children learn more words, we build a vocabulary wall which helps them to revisit their learning and use the words in their written work across the curriculum. Please note, that each new set of words should be recorded in a different colour so that children can more easily refer to their prior

learning. Each half term the vocabulary wall is rebuilt. A record of each word taught is kept in each child's vocabulary book. These books are passed on to the next teacher within KS1 and KS2 each academic year.

In UKS2, the children learn 5 words a week, in KS1, three words are learnt over two weeks and in EYFS children learn 1 word each week. The tier 2 words are taken from age related comprehension text.

The key steps in the teaching and learning of Robust Vocabulary Instruction are outlined below.

### **KS2 Summary of the Instructional Sequence for the Teaching of Vocabulary**

1. Session 1: Introduce and define the words to all children
2. Session 2: Recap and teach the word using specific methods of instruction
3. Session 3: Recap and continue to teach the words using specific methods of instruction and provide further opportunities for children to interact with the target words and apply their learning such as by putting the word in context verbally or in a written task.

At the end of each half term, learning is assessed. Through assessment, children are given the opportunity to demonstrate that they are able to apply their learning of vocabulary which has taken place over the half term.

**Session 1 Introduce the word** by giving a student-friendly explanation. Introduce the words with student friendly explanations, making the word meanings explicit and clear. To aid this process, use the Cobuild dictionary <http://dictionary.reverso.net/english-cobuild/> a. Try to capture what is particular about a word and how it is typically used. b. Explain the meaning in everyday language. c. Anchor your explanation by including words such as something, someone, or describes.

2. Regarding multiple meanings: Do choose words with multiple meanings if students already know one of the meanings: e.g. fast—moving quickly; fast—not eating for a period of time. When children do not know the multiple meanings of words try not to choose these words especially when meanings are not at all related: e.g. sound—what you hear; sound—the body of water; sound—sturdy

### **Session 2/3 Teaching and learning of vocabulary**

The aim is for children to engage with the given words and in doing so, they will develop a deep understanding of word. The example activities below give guidance on how to engage children, but importantly the following also must be adhered to in each session for greater impact:

- Review the word in the story context
- Ask children to repeat the word. (Pronouncing a word helps build a memory for the sound and meaning.)
- Examples of the word used in contexts different from the original should be given.
- Ask children to generate their own examples.
- Finally, the children should say the word again to reinforce phonological representation and meaning.

In session three there should be some element of children applying their learning to a given context, this can be verbal or written.

### **KS1 Summary of the Instructional Sequence for the Teaching of Vocabulary**

In KS1, each RVI session involves a new word being introduced and any other words taught over the two week cycle are revisited. The introduction of a new word and activities to teach and learn new vocabulary are the same as the methods used in KS2. The emphasis as in KS2 is to ensure that children are actively learning. At the end of the two week cycle in KS1, children consolidate their learning by applying their knowledge of the five RVI words taught.

### **EYFS Summary of the Instructional Sequence for the Teaching of Vocabulary**

The teaching and learning of RVI words in EYFS follow the same structure as in KS2, but only one new word is taught each week.

## Example Activities

### Questions/Reasons/Examples

- If you are walking around a dark room, you need to do it cautiously? Why? What are some other things that need to be done cautiously?
- What is something you could do to impress your teacher? Why?
- Which of these things might be extraordinary? Why or why not?  
A shirt that was comfortable, or a shirt that washed itself?
- Does morsel mean a big meal or a small piece of food?
- Which would be a good time to eat just a morsel? When you taste something for the first time, or when you are starving?
- Does delicate mean something small and easily broken or something big and heavy?

### Word Associations

Ask students to associate one of their new words with a presented word or phrase.

e.g. Which word goes with crook? (accomplice)

Which word goes with “gift to build a new hospital”? (philanthropist)

Which word goes with piano? (virtuoso)

Which word goes with kindergartner? (novice)

Which word does breakable make you think of? (delicate)

Have You Ever...?

Help students associate newly learned words with contexts and activities from their own experience.

e.g. “Describe a time when you might urge someone, commend someone, banter with someone.”

### Applause, Applause! (shades of meaning, connotations)

Students clap in order to indicate how much they would like (not at all, a little bit, a lot) to be described by the target words: frank, impish, vain, stern. And, as always, why they would feel that way.

Clap to show how much you would like:

- To have your house described as eerie
- To have your work described as preposterous

### Which Would...?

Form questions around target words by asking students which they would prefer between alternatives:

e.g. Which would you rather anticipate—your birthday or a dentist appointment? Why?

Which would you rather interact with—sharks or polar bears? Why?

Which would be easier to confine—butterflies or cats? Why?

### Making choices? Examples/Non-Examples

If any of the things I say might be examples of people clutching something say ‘clutching’ (Make the gesture). If not, don’t say anything:

- Holding on tightly to a purse
- Holding a fistful of money
- Softly stroking a cat’s fur.
- Holding onto branches when climbing a tree
- Blowing bubbles and trying to catch them

### Word Relationships

Encouraging children to think about how words might be related to each other. Working with two words and how their meanings might link can be done in many ways.

1. How are the words conscientious and random linked? - someone conscientious would not do things in a random way.
2. Could someone who is curious be a nuisance? Why?
3. Complete the sentence: You could describe someone as being miserable if they are always sad. On the other hand, you could describe someone as jovial if.....
4. Word sorts: Words that describe people/words that describe places

5. Word line! How surprised would you be if...? An extremely fragile plant survived in the North Pole? A determined student gets an excellent grade?

Least surprised-----most surprised

Pleasing -----disgusting

Calm -----scary

Lame-----cool

I can handle it -----I can't handle it

### Writing

Respond to word meanings using writing:

1. Sentence stems to complete: The king was miserable because...

2. More extended writing: Think of when you might need to investigate, cooperate, or be impressive. Write a paragraph about it.

3. Use several words within a longer piece: Write about a time when you arrive in a new city and people think you are a celebrity. Use these five words in your writing...

### Puzzles

Provide a series of clues for a vocabulary word. Each clue should begin to narrow the possible responses.

1. A lot of people would not actually see this person

2. It is someone who just watches

3. The word has nine letters and starts with an s.

The word is spectator.

1. Babysitters need to be.....

2. You can count on people who are .....

3. The word has 8 letters and starts with an r.....

The word is reliable.

### Simply Engage in the Word Meanings

E.g. When might you...?

How might you...?

Why might you...?

What might a clever dog learn to do when its owner comes home?

Why is eating leftovers a frugal thing to do?

What might an audience say about a splendid musician?

Give three things that would be catastrophic?

What would make a teacher say these things about a class?

- What an industrious class you are!
- What a clever class you are!
- What a splendid class you are!

### Assessment

Each half term children complete a short assessment which assesses their ability to recall and remember the meanings of the RVI words taught over the half term.

### Impact

Constant, open discussion makes vocabulary learning fun, builds resilience and strips the fear from unknown words. It builds the understanding of words for pupils who will take this knowledge and skill and use it across all curriculum areas and throughout their lives. Effective vocabulary teaching builds confident learners who will achieve their true potential.

### Monitoring and evaluation

The Subject Leader monitors the effectiveness of the teaching of Robust Vocabulary Instruction throughout the school via regular observations, pupil voice and analysis of resources and words recorded in books. The Subject Leader and class teacher both monitor the learning and progress made by pupils.

