

**Building Vocabulary**

**A child with a limited vocabulary is likely to struggle with reading, especially as they progress through school. A limited vocabulary affects their ability to understand what they are reading, and this will have implications for curriculum access across all subjects.**

**Vocabulary can be divided into three ‘tiers’:**

**Tier 1** contains basic common words such as *talk*, *boy*, *sad* and *table*.

**Tier 2** includes high-frequency words used in mature conversation and text such as *masterpiece*, *unfortunate*, *national* and *obvious*. This tier is important for reading comprehension and the communication of more complex ideas.

**Tier 3** vocabulary is low-frequency and specific to certain subjects e.g. when learning about eating a healthy diet, children will come across words such as *proteins*, *carbohydrate* and *metabolism*.

**General strategies to develop children’s vocabulary**

* Providing a word rich environment
* Raising word awareness through games and songs
* Explicit teaching of new words, including pre-teaching of new words before using them
* Using visual supports to support understanding of vocabulary
* Providing a wide range of reading materials and opportunities to discuss them
* Drawing pupils’ attention to the association between known and unknown words
* Praise and reward the use of new words so that pupils recognise the importance of using new and exciting words

**Practical classroom strategies**

* Include the introduction of new vocabulary in curriculum planning
* Introduce a Word of the Day, encouraging pupils to use the word in different contexts

**Practical classroom strategies cont…….**

* Identify a number of words and ask pupils to use them as often as possible during a lesson
* Check pupils understand what they are reading
* Encourage pupils to talk about a **WOW** word they have learned, explaining what it means to other pupils – make a wall of **WOW** words, returning to it frequently to check the words have been remembered and understood
* Provide word banks and story frameworks so pupils can use them for writing
* Incorporate whole class or group story writing where discussing and choosing different words will support pupils’ understanding and use of a range of words
* Use text-free books where the pupils tell the story from the pictures
* Provide interesting pictures/photos for pupils to describe
* Play word games
* Provide each pupil with a vocabulary book where they write down new words
* Show pupils a short film without the sound so that they have to construct the narrative and dialogue
* Use IT to support story composition and editing, using the dictionary and thesaurus functions
* Use story planners to create and develop a story
* Encourage pupils to re-tell a story in their own words
* **Reading partners** can provide helpful peer support in encouraging the discussion on the meaning of words
* **Talking partners** can discuss ideas before starting to write

A vital ingredient in vocabulary development is the opportunity for pupils to share and enjoy books.

**When reading with pupils:**

* Talk about what is happening in the story
* Explain new words and ask the pupil to think of a sentence using the new word
* Ask prediction questions such as *what do you think X will do next?*

***Remember direct teaching of vocabulary enhances listening and reading comprehension.***