

SCHOOLS

Developing Vocabulary

When children are having difficulties with words it is often because their internal word store is muddled. They learn each word in isolation rather than connecting it to other words. Usually, you learn a new word by connecting it and grouping it e.g. A “chair” is for sitting on, it’s goes with a table, it’s got legs, it’s part of the category called furniture. Children with language problems need help to make all these connections.

Strategies to help develop your pupil’s vocabulary

Repetition – writing it down, looking at it, talking about it (reinforce in small groups).

Materials; Topic Dictionaries (and bookmarks), wall displays, & worksheets.

Make it Visual – Show pictures, symbols, and examples of real objects. Many pupils have stronger visual memory and this will also help pupils without SEN. Also, by using real life displays and objects (i.e. holding up a beaker in science when labelling it, cutting up a cake to demonstrate division, or throwing a soft ball to demonstrate ‘rapidly’) the vocabulary and concepts become less abstract and hence easier to understand.

Materials: Symbols, pictures, pen and paper/whiteboard, actual objects.

Assign meaning/Categorise it – Talk about which category it comes from and other members of this category, mention its different meanings, its opposite, and synonyms.

Materials; Word webs, topic dictionaries (and bookmarks), topic wall displays, vocabulary activities in class and/or small groups.

Characteristics – talk about how it looks, where it’s from, what you use it for, etc.

Materials; Word webs, topic dictionaries (and bookmarks), topic wall displays, vocabulary activities in class and/or small groups.

Don’t just teach Nouns and labels! Many pupils find concepts and exam words even more difficult to understand and learn as they are abstract and difficult to demonstrate in the ‘here and now.’ Hence it’s really important to make sure pupils understand these words as well.

Activities to help your pupil learn and remember new vocabulary

Feely Bag

Put a few objects in a pillowcase or bag. Take turns getting items out of the “bag”. Say the name as you take each item out. Use the same items for several days.

Simon Says

Give the child simple instructions to follow e.g. touch your nose, touch your feet, jump. Let the child have a turn at telling you what to do!

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Pretend Shopping

Put a few items of food on the table ask the child to "buy" items for you.

Sorting

Mix together two groups of items e.g. clothes and some food. Get the child to sort them into two groups naming them as you go.

Lotto games

Play a lotto game. Each time you turn over a card, name it. Encourage the child to do the same.

Treasure hunts

Hide items around the room and get the child to find them! Name each item as you find it.

Describing words

Choose an easy word and find a picture of it e.g. a *train*. Put the picture of the train in the centre of the word web framework. Go around each section of the framework and see if the child can answer each question: (You can do this for a variety of words)

The word web framework:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Category | Transport |
| What do you do with it? | Drive it, move it, go on it. |
| Who uses it? | Everybody |
| Where? | It goes on tracks |
| When? | All the time, mostly in the day |
| What does it go with | - |
| What can you see? | Colour: whatever colour your picture is. Parts: it's got wheels, windows, doors etc. Size: big Shape: rectangle, the wheels are round |
| Do you like it? | Yes/no/ don't mind it. |

Additional Activities:

Describing hidden pictures:

- ❖ One child is given a picture that only they can see. They have to describe the picture giving two/three clues.
- ❖ The other children have to guess what the picture is.
- ❖ The child with the picture gets a point if the others manage to guess it.

The adult then goes over the clues showing which area of the word web was covered e.g. "You said that it was red. Look, you described what you could see". You can also ask the group what could have been a better clue.

