Building and Improving Vocabulary

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How do we learn words?

- Most children learn words from everyday conversation and from reading books regularly.
- Usually a child of 6-8 years comes across 6-7 new words a day, whereas a child of 8-12 years learns 12 new words a day.
- Although a child may come across a new word, they usually rely on hearing words 10-20 times before it becomes part of their ‘vocabulary’.
Why is building our vocabulary so important?

Come across new words regularly and learn their meaning

Reading comprehension and understanding improving

Use new words in their writing (as well as helping their spelling to improve!)
It’s also very important as part of the new Reading curriculum...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band 3</th>
<th>Band 4</th>
<th>Band 5</th>
<th>Band 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand the meaning of new words: using prefixes such as im, in, dis, mis.</td>
<td>I understand the meaning of new words: using prefixes such as re. sub, anti.</td>
<td>I can read aloud and understand the meaning of at least ½ the words on the Year 5/6 list.</td>
<td>I can read aloud and understand the meaning of all the words on the Yr5/6 list.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand what a text means by discussing my understanding of different words.</td>
<td>I understand what I read, using dictionaries to check the meaning of words.</td>
<td>I can find the meaning of words from their context.</td>
<td>I understand how writers use language and the impact it has.</td>
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<td>I can discuss words that excite me.</td>
<td>I can explain and discuss the meaning of words in context.</td>
<td>I can discuss the use of figurative language.</td>
<td>I can discuss exciting words and phrases used in books.</td>
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How to improve vocabulary

• Think of other words which mean the same thing (synonyms).
Can you think of a word which means the same as __________?
Can you think of another word the author could have used here?
• What does this word mean here? Does it always mean this?
Looking at synonyms..

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

Think of another word or phrase that means the same as, or is similar to, the one in **bold**. Looking at the rest of the sentence will help you. One has already been done for you.

1. The ship was lost in the **mist**.

2. Climbing a mountain is **risky**.

3. The monster was **enormous**.

4. The birds started to sing at **dawn**.

   **sunrise**

5. What time will the visitors **arrive**?

6. The arrow hit the **centre** of the target.

7. The puzzle was very **difficult**.

8. Try to **imagine** your favourite holiday.

9. **Perhaps** I’ll go to the cinema tonight.

10. Do you **possess** a ball I can borrow?

11. The teacher was **pleased** with her class.

12. The soldier was very **courageous**.
HOW TO BE GOOD

The word **good** can mean all sorts of things. Here are some sentences that contain the word **good**. What does it mean in these sentences? Draw a line linking each one to its meaning. One has already been done for you.

1. If you are **good**, I’ll take you to the seaside.  
   - safe

2. The baker’s pies are really **good**.
   - useful

3. The team needs to find some **good** players.
   - well-behaved

4. Hammers are very **good** for banging in nails.
   - kind

5. It’s important to have a **good** breakfast.
   - delicious

6. Is under the bed a **good** place to keep your money?
   - healthy

7. It’s **good** of you to give money to charity.
   - large

8. Pudding is served with a **good** amount of cream.
   - talented
Stepping aboard the stylish Southern Star is like walking into a stunning hotel with its innovative approach to exploring the best the world has to give. Your tour will encompass the beautiful wall-paintings and artefacts of ancient and vibrant civilisations, as well as the colour of the bazaars that have bewitched travellers for centuries. Relax as we traverse the shimmering blue waters of the Mediterranean or idle away an hour in the mesmerising infinity pool on Deck 6. On the third day, you will awake to the cultural charm of the most opulent palace on one of the most unspoiled islands anywhere in the world. Here, 16th Century opulence meets 21st Century modernity – a fascinating fusion of old and new. We wait to welcome you on board.

Find words that mean the same as, or are similar in meaning, to the following:

hypnotic
breathtaking
entranced
include
luxurious
art objects
sparkling
mixture
lively
new
VEXING VOCABULARY

Context helps when you’re trying to work out the meaning of a word. Tick the correct meaning of the words in bold, then explain your choice. One has been done already.

1. He might look **culpable**, but we have no evidence.
   - blameworthy □
   - dangerous
   - lonely
   - Explanation: ‘but we have no evidence’ suggests someone is to **blame** for a crime.

2. We don’t know who left the gate open but James looks **sheepish**.
   - woolly
   - guilty
   - tired
   - Explanation: ____________________________

3. With the new training in place, Chen is very **bullish** about the team’s future.
   - upbeat
   - overweight
   - pessimistic
   - Explanation: ____________________________
Thinking of other words which mean the same thing is a very good method of exploring meaning.

This is an example of an activity we may play in class! Using the word cards can you match up the words which mean the same thing?

• In a small group on your table, choose one set of cards.
• Each coloured set has three sets of words for you to find synonyms of.
• Find the 3 common words with the small number in the right corner. This number tells you how many words to find.
The evening’s entertainment is to follow the ancient creature known as Faylinn, a well-known figure. A harmless hermit who huddles in a stinking cave on the other side of the river, she is taunted by the local children: imitating her hobble, throwing stones, daring each other. We pray that our dreams will contain no sight or sound of that creepy, old witch. But every night we wake up bawling like kittens in a sack.

The sun has gone but a glimmering cut of light shows Faylinn dragging a branch behind her. Kindling for her fire, I reckon. Her face is smoke black. We follow, but soon the fingers of darkness begin to close around us. Stunted trees are grey ghosts crouching among the swirls of marsh gas as she disappears into her cave. It’s a poisonous place. The air catches throats.
Without changing the meaning of the sentence, select the best choice to replace the word or words in red.

- There was a **big** crowd at the stadium.
- We all agreed it had been a **bad** day.
- My Grandad builds **really good** bonfires.
- She wore a **pretty** dress at the party.
- My best friend is **kind**.
Change the word in red to allow the reader to infer that the character is being nasty/friendly: “Would you like to play over here?” said Henry.

Change the word in red to allow the reader to infer that the character is elderly/young: Steven walked across the road.
Tips for learning new words:

1. **Read, read, and read:** Use a combination of attempting to derive meaning from the context of the sentence as well as from looking up the definition in a dictionary. **Don’t be afraid to give a ‘child-friendly’ definition yourself** if you think the dictionary definition will take too much time.

2. Keep a **dictionary** or **thesaurus** on hand!

3. If children are reading independently, give them a **journal** and encourage them to keep a note of any words they don’t know the meaning of or like the sound of.

4. Draw a picture to memorise the meaning of new words you come across – these can be as funny as you like!
5. Keep a list of spelling words on the fridge. Try to use them in everyday conversation. Who can use these words the most in a week?

6. Learn a word a day. Using a word-a-day calendar -- or developing your own list of words to learn -- is a great technique many people use to learn new words.

7. Play hot potato – give a child a word, you must take it in turns to think of an alternative: i.e. said ➔ exclaimed ➔ shouted

8. Have fun with rhyming words! Is this a real or word or a made up word?
Finally....

- [http://www.scholastic.com/wordgirl/games.htm](http://www.scholastic.com/wordgirl/games.htm)