

HIAS OPEN RESOURCE

Encountering vocabulary challenges in texts

Supporting all readers in secondary schools

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Final version

Overview

This document contains...

Slides that could be used as part of a CPD sequence for teachers in school, supporting understanding of reading in secondary schools

Points to consider when using this resource

The resources in this series are intended as a companion piece to the DfE's series of training videos and guidance [*Supporting all readers in secondary school*](#), providing additional detail. This resource expands on ideas shared in video 6, [*Exploring vocabulary*](#) and provides links to research.

Vocabulary knowledge

- Reading and vocabulary knowledge: the most virtuous and positive of circles
 - Breadth of knowledge
 - Depth of knowledge
 - Types of vocabulary
 - Approaches to clarifying vocabulary
 - Most students need 12-20 exposures to a new word in different contexts to secure that word in their long-term memory.
 - Students encounter a much wider range of vocabulary when reading texts for study than in the planned content of the curriculum.



McKeown, M. G., Beck, I. L., Omanson, R. C., & Pople, M. T. (1985). Some Effects of the Frequency of Vocabulary Instruction on the Knowledge and Use of Words. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 20(5), 522-535

Elements of vocabulary knowledge

- Receptive and expressive understanding
- Exposure to words in a range of contexts
- Use and meaning in context
- Pronunciation
- Strategies for clarifying unfamiliar words
- Definition
- Morphology
- Etymology
- Links and word families

Morphological and etymological knowledge – the keys to the kingdom

Prefixes

- *con-* (together)
- *pro-* (forward)
- *ab-* (away from)
- *re-* (back again)
- *de-* (from, down from)
- *in-* (in, into)

Suffixes

- *-or/-er* (noun: someone who does)
- *-(t)ion* (noun: the act, process or state of)
- *-ence* (noun: action, state or quality)
- *-ive* (adjective: tending to, causing)

Root words

- *duct* (lead, take)
- *fer* (bring, carry)
- *fac* (do, make)
- *tract* (drag, pull)

Vocabulary routines



Model pronunciation



Snip into syllables



Student repetition



Look at morphemes and explain meanings



Link to known words and contexts

- *infrastructure*
- *in | fra | struc | ture*
- *Say it back to me
“infrastructure” again
“infrastructure”*
- *infra – beneath, underneath
struct – build
ure – the result of a process*
- ***Infrastructure is the result of building all the things that under-pin daily life – water works, transport, electricity***
- *infra-red, inferior, structural, construction, destructive*

Muscles transfer force to bones through tendons. They move our bones and associated body parts by pulling on them – this process is called muscle contraction.

However, muscle contraction cannot act to push the bone back into its original position, and because of this, muscles work in ‘antagonistic muscle pairs’. One muscle of the pair contracts to move the body part, the other muscle in the pair then contracts to return the body part back to the original position. Muscles that work like this are called **antagonistic pairs**.

In an antagonistic muscle pair as one muscle contracts the other muscle relaxes or lengthens. The muscle that is contracting is called the **agonist** and the muscle that is relaxing or lengthening is called the **antagonist**.

For example, when you perform a bicep curl, the biceps will be the agonist as it contracts to produce the movement, while the triceps will be the antagonist as it relaxes to allow the movement to occur.

Interestingly, texts used in PE theory include a wide range of challenging vocabulary and concepts. Most PE GCSE revision material is roughly pitched at a reading age of 15-17.

Vocabulary encounters in texts

Using vocabulary clarification routine for key words in context

- Okay, we haven't come across the word '*antagonistic*' in this context before.
- Let's read that aloud a couple of times: '*ant-ag-on-ist-ic*'
- Now you say it back to me, nice and loud.
- There are some bits of the word that remind me of other words I know – '*istic*' on the end of a word usually describes what something is like, as in *artistic*, *realistic*, so I'm thinking that this describes the muscle pair and gives you an idea of what it does.
- I also think I recognise the bit at the beginning '*ant*' – that sounds like '*anti*', which means '*against*' or '*opposite*', so I'm thinking it means that the muscles in the pair are working against each other.
- Has anyone heard the word '*antagonistic*' in another context? Right, Liam, you've been told off for being *antagonistic* towards Mr Smith before. Were you going up against him? You were? Okay, so it seems like we're on the right lines.
- Fun fact: '*agon*' in ancient Greek means '*contest*' or '*wrestling match*' so that works well here too – the *antagonistic muscle pair* are in a pulling contest with each other.
- Another context you might hear the word *antagonist* in school is in English lit, when the antagonist is the person in conflict with the main character, who is often called the *protagonist*.
- Now let's re-read that section with full understanding of the key word.

Familiarise students with conventions of texts when they arise – share the clues that can be used to understand

- **Unfamiliar phrases can pose as many problems for comprehension as challenging vocabulary**
- **Explicitly talk through the thinking process of an expert reader**
- ‘Muscles transfer force to bones through tendons.’
- *I didn't know what 'transfer force to bones' meant – that's not how I think of it – but I notice that the explanation actually comes in the next sentence.*
- ‘They move our bones and associated body parts by pulling on them – this process is called muscle contraction.’
- *That happens a lot when a text uses a key word or phrase that is a bit unfamiliar – it often explains what it means in the next sentence. Let's check whether that happens again in the next paragraph. Yes it does – look, the bit about antagonistic muscle pairs. That's worth looking out for again if you're reading something that seems a bit tough. Don't give up – just read the next sentence and see if it explains.*

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Please contact Joanna Kenyon Joanna.Kenyon@hants.gov.uk for support with secondary reading, whole school literacy and English.

For further details on the full range of services available please contact us using the following email: htlcdev@hants.gov.uk

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