VOCABULARY IN ACTION
Classroom strategies for vocabulary and language

Education
Endowment
Foundation

Robust strategies for teaching vocabulary and modelling language use in the classroom (adapted from Beck & McKeown). Use these techniques as part of teacher modelling, explanation, and pupil practice to support your vocabulary teaching.

Bespoke Definitions

Introduce words through explanations in everyday connected language, rather than dictionary definitions.

Purposeful Variation

Provide several contexts in which the word can be used purposefully or for alternative meanings.

Immediate Interaction

Build opportunities for pupils to interact with word meanings right away e.g. pair two target words, to support interaction with words in novel contexts: 'can splendour ever be unpleasant to look at?
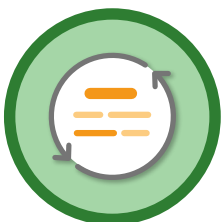
Deep Processing

Develop activities that require students to process the meanings of words in deep and thoughtful ways e.g. getting pupils to think hard about meanings, by identifying and explaining appropriate word usage.

Active Interest

Provide examples, situations and questions that are interesting and create discussion.

Repetition, Repetition, Repetition

Provide many encounters with target words, including through various contexts and retrieval activities.

Adapted from Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G. and Kucan, L. (2013) Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction, New York: Guildford.

Beck, I. et al. (2018) Deepening knowledge through vocabulary learning, Impact Journal: Developing Effective Learners , (Issue 3, Summer 2018).

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