higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PrimTEd Teaching Reading Study Guides

Study guide 6:

Vocabulary

Primary Teacher Education project
Department of Higher Education and Training

PrimTEd Teaching Reading Study Guides

Study guide 6: Vocabulary

© 2021 Department of Higher Education and Training

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

You are free to share (that is, copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format) and adapt (remix, transform, and build upon the material) as long as you follow these licence terms:

Attribution (by)

You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

Non Commercial (nc)

You can copy, distribute, display, perform, adapt and use this material for any purpose other than commercially (unless you get permission first). Non Commercial means not primarily intended for or directed towards commercial advantage or monetary compensation.

Share Alike (sa)

You may remix, transform, or build upon the material, but you must distribute your contributions under the same licence as the original.

No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the licence permits.

Notices
You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation.

For the full text of this Creative Commons licence go to:

https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/legalcode

Department of Higher Education and Training
Private Bag X174, Pretoria, 0001
123 Francis Baard Street, Pretoria, 0001
Tel.: 012 312 5911 / 0800 87 2222 / 086 999 0123
Fax.: 012 323 5618
Web: www.dhet.gov.za

Contents

Vocabulary 1

What does the literacy teacher need to know about vocabulary building? 1

What this study guide contains 1

What literacy teacher standards are covered? 2

1. Oral and written vocabularies 5

Unit 1: Self test questions 6

2. The importance of reading in vocabulary development 7

Unit 2: Self test questions 8

3. Explicit instruction on vocabulary 9

Instruction in specific words found in the classroom texts 9

Teacher read alouds 10

Teaching function words 11

Special words and figures of speech 12

Denotation and Connotation 14

Language registers 14

Unit 3: Self test questions 14

4. Word learning strategies: morphemic analysis 15

Morphemic analysis: using information about meaningful word parts (morphology) to work out the meanings of words in a text 15

Common Greek and Latin word roots in English 16

Word roots and bases and word families 18

Word families 19

Compound words 20

A morphemic analysis strategy related to morphemes, roots and affixes 20

Unit 4: Self test questions 20

5. Word learning strategies: contextual analysis 21

Using contextual clues in the text 21

Guessing the meaning of a word with the help of general knowledge 22

Combining contextual and morphemic analysis 23

Unit 5: Self test questions 24

6. Word learning strategies: dictionary use 25

Teaching dictionary use 25

Finding the meaning of words on the internet 26

Thesauri and other resources 26

Unit 6: Self test questions 26

7. Academic language vocabularies **27**
Unit 7: Self test questions 28

8. Assessing vocabulary knowledge **29**
Assessment rubrics 31
Unit 8: Self test questions 32

9. Planning vocabulary development **33**
Word lists of high frequency words 35
English sight words in the early grades 35
Unit 9: Self test questions 36

10. Vocabulary resources **37**
Books 37
Word lists 37
Academic word lists 37
Dictionaries, glossaries and thesauri 37
Vocabulary development plans and programmes 37
Vocabulary development in curriculum guides 38
Unit 10: Self test questions 38

11. Special issue – English vocabulary **39**
Unit 11: Self test questions 40

References **41**

Self test answers **45**

Vocabulary

What does the literacy teacher need to know about vocabulary building?

This study guide provides a basic information on vocabulary building for teachers of reading and writing in all the phases of primary school. Teachers need to understand the reciprocal relationship between spoken language and written language and why and how both oral and written vocabularies have to be developed in primary schooling. They have to recognize the complex relationship between oral language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, and reading comprehension.

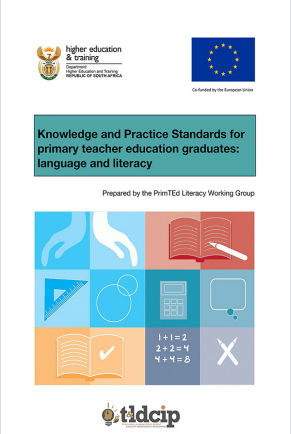
Vocabulary learning enhances all aspects of oral language and reading and writing proficiency. A broad vocabulary strengthens precise communication, particularly in writing. It also improves general knowledge. Learners who know more words are likely to be better at what they do and be more self-confident.

As children read, they come across new words that they may not have been exposed to in their oral language. In order for reading comprehension to occur, children must have word knowledge, or vocabulary, in addition to knowledge of the structure or grammar of the language and reasoning skills. The development of a growing vocabulary happens through oral language practice, by explicit instruction, and by reading itself.

What this study guide contains

There are eleven units:

1. Oral and written vocabularies
2. Importance of reading in vocabulary development
3. Explicit instruction on vocabulary
4. Word learning strategies: morphemic analysis
5. Word learning strategies: contextual analysis
6. Word learning strategies: dictionary use
7. Academic language vocabularies
8. Assessing vocabulary knowledge
9. Planning vocabulary development
10. Vocabulary resources
11. Special issue - English vocabulary



What literacy teacher standards are covered?

This study guide covers six of the standards (or portions of them). These knowledge standards relate to the knowledge of language and literacy that teaduate teachers need to have to teach learners to read and write.

5. Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of oral language in literacy development and of the influence of written language on oral language.

5.1 The reciprocal relationship between spoken language and written language can be explained.

5.2 The distinction between the language of everyday Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and that of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is described.

5.3 Ways of developing listening and speaking in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases are described.

5.4 The relationship between orality development and literacy development in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases is explained.

5.5 The importance of vocabulary development in home language and first additional language can be discussed.

5.6 The importance of reading aloud and its role in the encouragement of reading for pleasure can be articulated.

5.7 An understanding of varied oral genres and types of from different cultures is demonstrated, e.g. praise poems, riddles, nursery rhymes.

11. Demonstrates basic knowledge of phonics, e.g. knowing letter shapes, knowing that written words are built up from letters and letter groups with sound values

11.1 Phonics is defined.

11.2 The use of phonics and decoding strategies appropriate to the particular language and grade are identified.

11.3 Awareness of the similarities and differences in phonics strategies in analytic/ isolating and agglutinating languages is shown.

11.4 The importance of syllables and word morphology in the African languages is recognised.

11.5 Explanations of the principles underpinning particular phonics approaches are given.

11.6 Knowledge of resources available to support particular approaches/programmes is demonstrated.

12. Demonstrate vocabulary and word study knowledge, e.g. know how to help learners extend vocabulary for communication and academic purposes

12.1 The role of vocabulary in learning across and beyond the curriculum in expanding the learner's conceptual world is articulated.

12.2 A variety of research-based ways to introduce and build new language and vocabulary in both home and additional languages (e.g., word study, word parts and word associations, etc.) throughout the curriculum and across different subjects and grade levels is described, including:

- Word features and their structures, for example, syllables, prefixes, infixes, suffixes, roots, inflections, etc., are explained.
- A list of high frequency and sight words (words which should be instantly recognisable) for the grade level is presented.
- A appropriate vocabulary list with the words in the particular language that should be spoken and written by the end of a particular grade (and which take into account necessary subject specific vocabularies) can be presented.

12.3 The distinction between expressive and receptive vocabulary is explained.

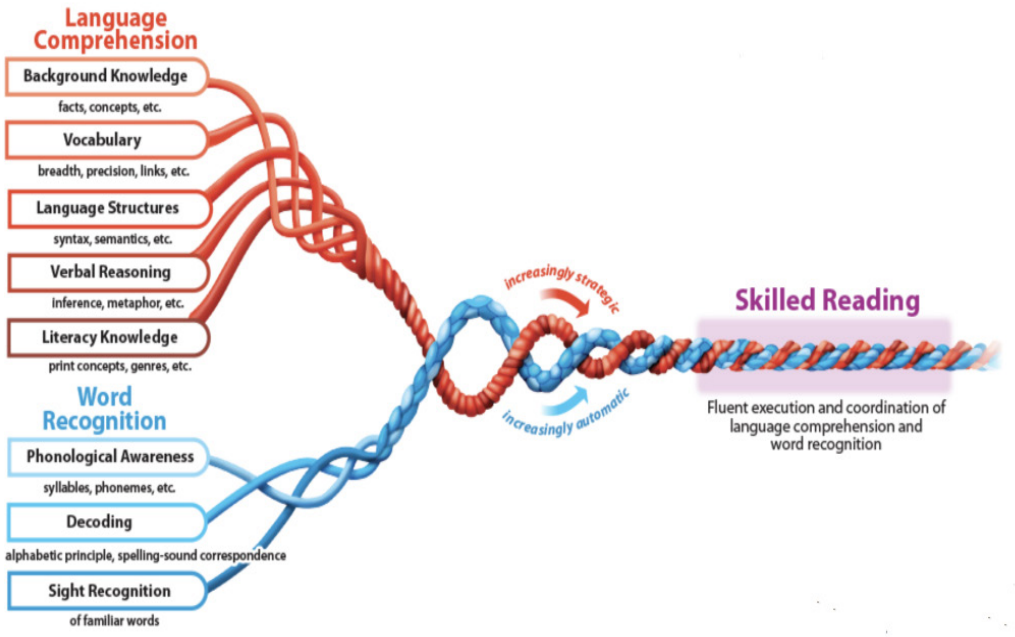
16. Demonstrates knowledge about typical sequences of development in children's spelling.

16.1 The role of knowledge of spelling strings and patterns and morphemes in spelling accurately in the particular language orthography is demonstrated.

16.2 Knowledge of the role of morphemes in spelling is demonstrated (e.g. in Nguni languages, um, aba, isi, izi, ile, etc. and in English, -ed, -ing, sub-, pre-, in-, etc.) is demonstrated.

16.3 Knowledge of spelling strings and patterns is demonstrated (knowing the patterned basis to spelling (there are a limited number of possible spellings for individual syllables) (e.g. in English ight (as in height, light, night), ei (as in their, weigh), etc).

16.4 Understanding the role of invented spelling and influence of the learners' linguistic repertoire on spelling development is demonstrated.



As can be seen from this digram based upon Scarborough (2001) skilled reading is dependent upon both **language comprehension** and **word recognition** and both of these require various components of vocabulary knowledge – background knowledge, vocabulary, metaphor, recognition of familiar words, and so on.

1. Oral and written vocabularies

There is a complex relationship between oral language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, and reading comprehension.

The number of words commonly used in nearly all oral speech (child or adult) is quite low – probably about 400 to 600 words. Most children's books have a richer **vocabulary** than most adult speech or the speech on the television programmes that children watch.

Another thing to note is that we usually recognize and understand many more words than we actually use (this is our passive vocabulary). Our active vocabulary is the words we actually use in speech (or writing). A similar distinction is made between our receptive vocabulary (all the words we know and can read and write) and expressive vocabulary (words we can say or write in a grammatically acceptable way).

It is important that teachers also understand that children enter school knowing varying numbers of words. Estimates are given of linguistically advantaged children entering into Grade 1 knowing two to four times more words than those the linguistically disadvantaged children know. The variance comes from growing up in different family and community environments. Children who come from poor communities typically have smaller vocabularies than children who come from wealthier homes. (Children whose parents give books to their pre-school children and read story books to them will have larger vocabularies.)

If learners hope to access post-secondary study they have to enormously enlarge their vocabularies – probably to at least 20 000 words. During their schooling they should be acquiring about 800 to 1 000 new **word root** meanings a year.

There are also words that are necessary to make critical distinctions in the physical and social worlds in which the learners live. Without these word knowledge tools, one will be severely disadvantaged in attaining one's goals in an advanced modern society.

Building a larger vocabulary is done partly by explicit instruction in school. But the number of new words learned in such a way is relatively small – about 400 a year. Most vocabulary development comes from reading. Learners have to know how to read fluently to continue to grow their vocabulary at the rate that is necessary. When they find new words in texts, they have to be able to find out their meaning through using dictionaries and other resources.

Vocabulary building requires different ways for the learner to deal with **word recognition**. The learner will know the meaning of some words, be able to explain the meaning of, and be able to use those words in speech and writing. Other words may be recognized and understood when reading but are not used in speech or writing. Then there are words which the learner has a very vague idea of their meaning, or recognizes the words but does not know what they mean, or has never heard or seen the words in print before.

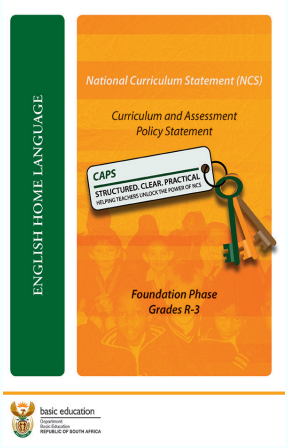
The teacher who wants to teach vocabulary effectively needs to have strategies to deal with these varying levels of word recognition or non-recognition.

vocabulary: the words known or used by a person or group or a set of words compiled from written or oral sources

word root: a morpheme that expresses the basic meaning of a word and cannot be further divided into smaller morphemes

morpheme: The smallest meaningful grammatical unit of a language, that cannot be further divided (e.g. in the word "incoming", in, come, and ing are morphemes). In the word "pins", pin and the suffix s are morphemes. "Pin" is a morpheme that is also a word.

word recognition: the ability to recognise a written word correctly and virtually effortlessly without consciously decoding the individual letters or guessing what the word means



The Department of Basic Education's ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*** (CAPS) puts great stress on oral language development during the Foundation Phase. Specific attention has to be given to listening and speaking skills and teaching time is allocated to listening and speaking activities. Vocabulary enrichment should form a key part of these activities.

Unit 1: Self test questions

1. In everyday speech we usually make use of only about _____to _____ words. [400 to 600 / 100 to 200 / 4000 to 6000]
2. Distinguish between our passive and active vocabularies.
3. Indicate whether these statements are true or false.

   All children when entering school know more or less the same number of words. _____

   Children who come from wealthy backgrounds typically have larger vocabularies. _____

   A person who wishes to study at university probably needs to know at least 10 000 words. _____
4. Define **morpheme** and **word root**.
5. Where does most learned vocabulary come from? _____

2. The importance of reading in vocabulary development

Once a reader decodes a word, vocabulary plays a predominant part in reading comprehension. Vocabulary is necessary for comprehension – unless one understands 95 percent of the words in a text one is unlikely to make sense of it.

Reading comprehension depends heavily on knowledge of the individual word meanings in a text, and these meanings are learned by repeated exposure to a word's use in context and by explicit, direct instruction in word meanings.

The only opportunities to acquire new words, to build vocabulary, occur when the child is exposed to these new words in oral language or in written texts.

How does the child learn new words that are outside his or her current vocabulary?

A consistent finding related to vocabulary learning is that children need multiple exposures to a new word in meaningful contexts to learn it well. These multiple exposures will happen much more often while reading than while talking or watching television.

Most vocabulary development takes place outside of explicit instruction. Indeed, the amount of time devoted to reading out of school is probably the most important indicator of who will prosper in later life: cognitively, socially and economically.

This reinforces again the vital importance of early fluency in reading. There is a clear reciprocal relationship between vocabulary and reading development.

It also needs to be recognized that words gained through reading can also enhance oral language proficiency. The more words a child knows the easier it is to read and comprehend. This leads to building more vocabulary knowledge.

These points are well summarised in a ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*** document (Department of Basic Education, 2013c, pp. 48-49):

> "Learners also need a wide vocabulary, which is perhaps the single most important factor enabling a person to communicate well. A wide vocabulary is essential for all the language skills, but especially for reading and writing. The most effective way for learners to improve their grammar and increase their vocabulary is by reading intensively inside and outside of the classroom."

In classrooms where the language of instruction is not the mother tongue of the learners there is the problem that they may not have sufficient vocabulary and grammar to make sense of what they read. The teacher has to rapidly build up their vocabulary and getting them to read more in the language of instruction is the best way of improving their vocabulary, providing that there are sufficient simple texts at the right level for independent breading (Department of Basic Education, 2011d, p. 16).

fluency: reading fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with meaningful expression. Fluency is the bridge between word recognition and comprehension (in which meaning is gained from what is read). Fluent readers can recognize a high percentage of words automatically.

Unit 2: Self test questions

1. What percentage of the words in a text does one need to know to make sense of it, to comprehend its meaning?

   _____

2. Is it true that children usually understand a new word after hearing its meaning explained only once?

   _____

3. What is reading fluency?

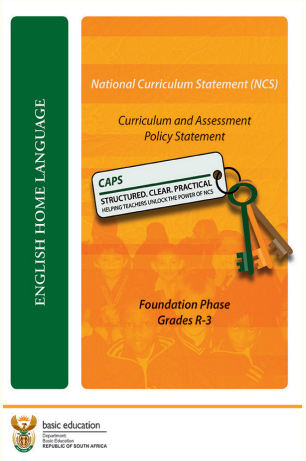
3. Explicit instruction on vocabulary

Teachers need to be able to teach vocabulary. Direct vocabulary instruction may be particularly important for learners with weak oral language skills who lack the proper foundation for easily acquiring new words.

Instruction in specific words found in the classroom texts

Children should be explicitly taught specific words selected from texts that they are reading (Beck and McKeon, 1985; Beck *et al.*, 2002; Biemiller, 2005, 2010).

This must be done regularly and intensively – in the Foundation and Interim Phases at a starting rate of about 2 words per school day in Grade 1 (and double that for learners with a small oral vocabulary). (The ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*** gives detailed instructions on vocabulary instruction for the various primary school phases for both home language and First Additional Language.)



Some basic words will already be known by children and do not need to be taught (though FAL learners may).

First taught should be generally useful words that occur frequently in oral language and in texts and are central for reading comprehension. They can usually be explained in everyday language, starting with partially known words and words that can be visualised – so called concrete words naming things that can be seen, felt, heard, tasted.

The initial focus should be on words that appear in clear contexts in the texts the children read in class or have read to them in class. Vocabulary in context is more easily understood.

The teacher can pre-teach new words that will appear in the text or during read alouds, and ask questions to help determine the meaning of a word as it is used in the context of the story.

After the text has been read the teacher should discuss the vocabulary in its context. Explanation should be given of each word's meaning and typical use. Examples can be given of the word's meanings in various contexts.

The children need to have multiple exposures to each new word. The teacher must ensure that the learners practice using the words in new contexts and situations and link them to other words commonly used in those contexts..

Instruction that engages learners in active analysis of word meanings is more effective in promoting learning than instruction that only has learners relate words to their own background knowledge and personal experiences.

The teaching of the specialised words of school subjects should be done as the need arises.

Vocabulary instruction is less effective if only taught by giving a list of words for children to learn each day instead of explaining their meanings in context, discussing their meanings, and checking the spelling thereof. (Though these lists are useful to the teacher for ensuring that a full set of appropriate vocabulary is covered in class instruction.)

Teacher read alouds

Before reading, the teacher introduces the target words (about ten words from one or two books per week in Grade 1 gradually increasing in the subsequent grades). Read and pronounce each word and write it on the board. Explain the word's meaning in everyday language. Provide a different context or different contexts for the word.

During the reading, very briefly explain each target word (as well as any words that may affect comprehension).

After the reading review the target words (not the comprehension words) –

- say the word, and write it on the board,
- give a plain language explanation of its meaning,
- give examples of the word in an appropriate context,
- provide a different context,
- identify appropriate use of the word in sentences,
- say the word again.

Help the learners engage actively with the words. There are many ways of doing this to check the understanding of the learners The teacher can ask the children to:

- develop question sentences with the target words
- use a number of target words together in a question sentence
- given a context, develop questions for all the words
- choose the best word for a sentence
- say whether a word use is correct
- say whether a sentence using the word is True or False
- give **antonyms** or **synonyms** for the words,
- give examples and non-examples of the words (e.g. a crow is an example of a bird, a bat is not)
- use the word to start or complete sentences,
- etc.

Learners need to be rewarded for expanding their vocabulary by using new words in their writing even if only partially correct.

antonym: a word with an opposite meaning to another word, e.g. *good* and *evil*

synonym: a word that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase in the same language, e.g. *close* is a synonym of *shut*.

Teaching function words

Function words are words that have little meaning in themselves but help hold together the other words in the sentence, expressing the grammatical relationships among them. Thus they form important elements in the structures of sentences. They help alert the reader to the structure of sentences.

Function words are crucial for comprehension and the teacher will often need to explain them when reading aloud.

The following are typical function words in English:

Function words in English	
Type	**Examples**
articles: indicate specific or non-specific nouns	the, a, an, some, any
conjunctions: connect words, phrases or clauses	and, but, or, for, nor, so, yet
correlative conjunctions: pairs of conjunctions that work together	either/or, neither/nor; not only/but also
subordinating conjunctions: joining a clause to a subordinate clause	after, although, as, as if, as soon as, as far as, as long as, as though, because, before, even if, even though, how, however, if, in order (that), in as much as, in that, in case (that), insofar as, lest, no matter how, now that, once, only, only if, provided (that), since, so that, supposing (that), than, that, then, though, thus, till, unless, until, well, when, whenever, where, wherever, whereas, whether, while, why
pronouns	I, you, he, she, it; me, you, him, her, it; my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its; we, you, they; us, you, them; our, ours, your, yours, their, theirs
prepositions: used to show a relationship in space or time or a logical relationship between two or more people, places or things	about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, at, because of, before, behind, below, beneath, beside(s), between, beyond, but, by, concerning, despite, down, during, except, excepting, for, from, in, in front of, in spite of, inside, instead of, into, like, near, of, off, on, onto, out, outside, over, past, regarding, since, through, throughout, to, toward(s), under, underneath, until, up, up to, upon, with respect to, with, with regard to, within, without
auxiliary verbs: show tense	is, am, are, do, did, will, would, can, could, shall, should, has, have, got, etc.

A full range of function words should be known by the end of the Senior Phase.

Special words and figures of speech

There are several categories of words that have to be given special vocabulary learning attention, partly because they regularly appear in the literature of a particular language or culture. Some of these are the following:

	Definition	Examples
synonym	Words that have the same or very similar meanings	happy/glad close/shut
antonym	Words with opposite meanings	good/evil hot/cold
paronym	Words pronounced or written in a similar way but which have different meanings	alternately/alternatively affect/effect conjuncture/conjecture bear/bare
polyseme	A word or phrase with several different meanings	bright (light)/bright (clever)
homonym	Words pronounced and/or spelled the same but which have a different meaning	bat (flying animal) bat (cricket bat)
homophone	Words pronounced the same but which have a different meaning	
homograph	Words spelled the same but which have different meaning	

polyseme: a word or phrase that has several meanings. In many languages many of the high-frequency words used in common speech have more than one meaning. Johnson *et al.* (1983) found that 70% of key Foundation Phase English words were polysemous.

figure of speech: a word or phrase intentionally used in a way different from common use to emphasize or embelish both spoken and written language.

Another set of words and phrases, called **figures of speech** and which include similes, metaphors and idioms, are very language and culture specific and therefore tend to confuse new learners of a language. Some are listed below.

Figures of speech		
	Definition	**Examples**
simile	A comparison of two things that point to some similarity by using a word such as "like" or "as"	He was like a lion.
metaphor	An identification of two separate things without using comparison words such as "like" and "as". It states directly that one thing is another thing	He was a lion. He is a rolling stone.
idiom	A phrase which means something different from the plain meaning of its words	Jonas kicked the bucket. [meaning Jonas died] I am under the weather. [meaning I am sick]

personification	Referring to animals, objects or abstract ideas as if they are human	She was nature's child. My alarm yelled at me this morning
hyperbole	Deliberate exaggeration to emphasise something	I waited for you for ages. This textbook weighs a ton.
irony	A subtle, often humorous or sarcastic, statement that appears to be a plain statement but which in the context means something very different or the opposite	During a thunderstorm saying "Isn't this weather pleasant." Calling a warlord a 'prince of peace'
sarcasm	A hurtful remark, often using irony, to express contempt or ridicule for somebody	Are you always this annoying or are you exerting extra effort today?
understatement	Statement suggesting that something is much smaller or less important than it really is	The Covid-19 lockdown was a minor irritation in 2020.
pun	A play on words, typically by using words that sound similar but have very different meanings	To the person who invented zero, thanks for nothing. Need an ark to save two of every animal? I noah guy.
onomatopoeia	Words which (seem to) imitate the sounds they refer to	moo hiss
oxymoron	A pair of words which contradict each other	bitter sweet deafening silence
metonomy	Using the name of one thing for another thing with which it is associated or an attribute of	Pretoria = government crown = king
synedoche	Using the name of a part to stand for the whole	suits = businessmen hands = workers
litotes	A phrase in which a positive statement is made by negating a negative statement	He was not a bad player = He was a good player
euphemism	A mild, indirect or vague word or phrase used instead of a more direct but unpleasant or offensive one	between jobs (unemployed) let go (fired) late (dead)

Many of these figures of speech require a lot of practice to be used effectively in writing, particularly if writing in a second language.

Idioms particularly tend to confuse those unfamiliar with them and learners of a new language must learn its idiomatic expressions as vocabulary. (Unfortunately, languages often have thousands of idiomatic expressions – English has about 25 thousand, though most are uncommon or linked to certain localities).

Denotation and Connotation

Denotation is the precise, literal meaning of a word – as a dictionary would define it. Connotations are additional meanings associated with the word that arise from an individual's experience and the culture of the day. A good example would be colour words. The denotation of "red" is simply a colour. But the connotations of "red" are many – danger, warning, blood, stop, vitality, a political tendency, etc.

As learners progress as readers and writers they have to become aware of the connotations of the words in the vocabulary they know and use in particular contexts.

Language registers

The different ways a speaker or writer uses language – vocabulary, tone of voice, grammar, etc. – in different social situations is called a register. You speak politely to a stranger or a superior, very formally in an interview or making a presentation, informally and casually when speaking to a friend. A close group of friends or people working together or a gang may use slang – speaking in an informal register using words that members of the group prefer over the common vocabulary of the standard language to help built a separate group identity and exclude outsiders.

Slang is not to be confused with jargon which is the specialized language of a professional or occupational group. While this language is often useful or necessary for those within the group, it is usually meaningless to outsiders.

Learners have to get used to the formal register – and the vocabulary that goes with it – in classroom interactions and in the various situations of life that demand it.

Unit 3: Self test questions

1. Direct vocabulary instruction is particularly important for people with _____ _____ _____ _____.
2. In Grade 1 the children should be taught at least <u>two / ten/ twenty</u> words each school day.
3. What words should be taught first?
4. In teaching a new word what should the teacher explain?
5. What are function words?
6. Distinguish between an antonym and a synonym and between a simile, a metaphor and an idiom.
7. Define a polyseme and give an example.
8. Give an example of a homophone.

4. Word learning strategies: morphemic analysis

In addition to specific word instruction, children should be taught word-learning strategies that they can use on their own (which they need because most vocabulary development will come from their own individual reading).

It is impossible to provide specific instruction for all the words that children do not know. So learners have to be able to determine the meaning of words that are new to them but are not taught directly. This becomes more and more important in the Intermediate, Senior and FET phases.

To do this, children have to develop effective word-learning strategies for the following four types of new word learning:

- Learning the meaning for a new word representing a known concept
- Clarifying and enriching the meaning of a known word
- Learning a new meaning for a known word
- Learning the meaning of a new word representing an unknown concept.

These word learning strategies rest on the foundation that children already know how to apply grade appropriate phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words and finding out their meaning.

Teachers need to know the following strategies and help children practise them:

- morphemic analysis
- contextual analysis
- dictionary use

Morphemic analysis: using information about meaningful word parts (morphology) to work out the meanings of words in a text

The **morphology** of words should be taught in the context of rich vocabulary instruction making use of meaningful contexts in the texts being read.

The important word parts should be explained systematically with time for reteaching and practice. Learners need to be taught about words parts and how to assemble and disassemble words, especially in content-area texts.

Explicit instruction on morphology should enable learners to determine a word's meaning based on its **root**, that is, the **morpheme** that expresses the basic meaning of the word, though that meaning may be altered in different ways by prefixes and/or infixes and/or suffixes attached to the root.

morphology: the study of the structure of words as combinations of smaller units of meaning within them (morphemes), how they are formed, and their relationship to other words in the same language. Such study analyses the structure of words and parts of words, such as stems, root words, prefixes, infixes and suffixes. Morphology also looks at such things as intonation and stress, and the ways context can change a word's pronunciation and meaning.

morpheme: the smallest meaningful grammatical unit of a language, that cannot be further divided (e.g. in the word "incoming", "in", "come", and "ing" are morphemes). In the word "pins", "pin" and the suffix "s" are morphemes.

Roots, prefixes, and suffixes are all single morphemes. In contrast, stems and bases can be composed of one or many morphemes.

word root: a morpheme that expresses the basic meaning of a word and cannot be further divided into smaller morphemes. Some roots can stand alone and some cannot. Many word roots are identical to word bases.

word stem: a word root or word or compound word before any prefixes or inflectional suffixes are attached. It carries the meaning of the word.

Types of morphemes	Examples
Unbound morphemes Can stand alone as words	Common root words: go, help, play, run, sun, tin
Bound morphemes Cannot stand alone as words	Prefixes: dis-, in-, re-, un- Derivational suffixes: -ful, -less, -ly Inflectional suffixes: -ed, -es, -ing, -s Greek roots: bio, graph, scope Latin roots: dict, ject, port, struct, tact

Common Greek and Latin word roots in English

English vocabulary words that contain Greek or Latin roots. All are bound morphemes that cannot stand alone. Greek roots are common in mathematics and science, Latin roots in more general academic vocabulary.

Greek word roots in English		
Greek Root	**Meaning**	**Examples**
aer	air, atmosphere	aeronautics, aerosol
arch	chief, leader	archbishop, hierarchy, matriarch, monarch, monarchy, patriarch, anarchy
arche/archaeo	primitive, ancient, origin	archaic, archaeology
astro	star	astronomy, astrology, astronaut, asteroid, asterisk
auto	self	autobiography, autonomy, autoimmune
biblio	books, of books	bibliography, bibliophile
bio	life	autobiography, biology
chron	time	chronology, chronicles
cosm/cosmo	universe, world	microcosm, cosmic
dem	people	demographics, democracy, demagogue
derma	skin	dermatologist, hypodermic
ethn/ethno	nation, people group	ethnicity, ethos
geo	earth	geography, geology
gen	family	genealogy, genetic, genus
gram	writing	grammar, grammatical
graph	write, record	autograph, graphic
hemo	blood	hemophiliac, hemorrhage
hiero	sacred, holy	hieroglyphics, hierarchy
hydr/hydra/hydro	water	hydrate, hydraulic, dehydrate
ideo	idea	ideology, ideologue
log	word, speech	logic, dialogue
meter/metr	measure	diameter, thermometer
micro	small	microscope, microcosm

ology	study of	biology, methodology
ono/onym	name	anonymous, onomatopoeia, pseudonym
phil	friendly love	philanthropic, philanthropy
phob	fear	phobia, arachnophobia
phon	sound	phonetic, telephone, phonograph
photo/phos	light	photograph, phosphorous, phosphorescent
pneu	air, breath	pneumonia, pneumatic
polis	city state	metropolis, cosmopolitan
psyche	soul, animating spirit	psychology, psychic
pyr	fire	pyromaniac
techno	art, skill	technique, architect
tele	from afar	telephone
the/theo	god	theology, apotheosize

Latin word roots in English		
Latin Root	**Meaning**	**Examples**
acer/acid/acri	bitter, sour	acerbic, acidic
agri	field, country	agriculture, agribusiness
alb	white	albino, alabaster
amic	friendly	amicable, inimical
aud	hear, sound	audible, audiology
bon	good	bonanza, bonus
ced/cess	go, yield	recession, recede, recess
femin	woman	feminine, feminism
flect/flex	bend	reflect, flexible
foli	leaf	foliage, defoliant
fract	to break	fracture, fractal
lat	broad, wide	latitude, lateral
lingu	language	bilingual, linguistics
longus	long	longevity, longitude
magn	great, large	magnificent, magnitude
mar	sea	maritime, marine
mir	amazement, wonder	miracle, mirage
mit/miss	send, cast	remit, dismiss
mut	to change	mutate, mutation
naut	sailor	nautical, nautilus
nomin	to name	name, nominate, nominal
not	note, paper	notable, noted, notary
nov	new	novice, novel, novelty
port	to carry, to bear	portal, transport

word root: a morpheme that expresses the basic meaning of a word and cannot be further divided into smaller morphemes. Some roots can stand alone and some cannot. Many word roots are identical to word bases.

word base: a morpheme or set of morphemes, which is itself a meaningful stand alone word, and from which other words can be created by the addition of affixes of any kind.

word stem: a word root, word or compound word before prefixes or inflectional suffixes are attached. It carries the word meaning.

word family: a group of words with related meanings that share a common word base and that differ in form due to the application of different morphological operations to alter the meaning of the base.

derivation: the process of creating a new word out of an old word, usually by adding a prefix or a suffix. A derivation may change the word category or part of speech.

inflection: a change (an inflection) in the form of a word (typically the ending) to express a grammatical function or attribute such as tense, mood, person, number, case, or gender. Inflections don't change the word category or part of speech.

etymology: the study of the historical origin and development of words

pel/puls	drive, push	dispel, repulse
port	carry	transport, portable
rupt	to break	rupture, interrupt
sed	sit	reside, sediment
sol	comfort, soothe	solace, consolation
spect	see	spectator, inspect, prospector
struct	build, form	construct, destruction
tact	to touch	contact, tactile
trans	across, on the other side of	transfer, transcend, transgress, transit

Latin and Greek roots for numbers in English

Numeral	Latin	Greek	Examples
1	uni-	mono-	uniform, unicycle, monotonous, monocotyledon
2	bi-, duo-	di-	bilingual, duet, dichotomy
3	tri-	tri-	triangle, trimester, triple, triathlon
4	quad-	tetra-	quadruple, quadrangle, quartet, tetrahedron
5	quint-	penta-	quintuplet, quintile, pentagon, pentangle, pentathlon
6	sex-	hex-	sextuplet, hexagogon
7	sept-	hept-	septet, heptagon
8	octa-	octo-	octagonal, octopus
9	non-, nove-	ennea-	nonagon, novena, ennead
10	deci-	dec-, deca-	decimal, decade, decathlon
100	cent-	hect-	centennial, hectogram, hectare
1 000	milli-	kilo-	millipede, kilogram, kilobyte
10 000		myria-	myriad
1 000 000		mega-	megabyte, megawatt
1 000 000 000		giga-	gigabyte, gigahertz

Word roots and bases and word families

A **word root** is the simplest form of the word. It can be the **word base** for a variety of words derived from it. These words form the **word family.** The **derived** words are usually formed from the base form of a word plus its **inflected** forms or derived forms using **prefixes** and **suffixes**. There are also other words that have a common **etymological** origin to the base. The word base and the derivatives all have a similar core meaning.

Knowing the meaning of one root word can help the learner understand the meaning of words in the word family that are related to that root word.

Word families

A word family is a group of words closely related in meaning and sharing the same word root, for example: "**run**"

> "**run**" **with suffix:** runs, running, runnings, runner, runners, runway, runways, runnaway, runaways, runny, runnel, runnels, runoff, runoffs, runabout, runabouts, runup, rundowns, runtime, runnable
>
> "**run**" **with prefix:** overrun, outrun, forerun, forerunner, rerun, underrun, underruns, roadrunner
>
> "**run**" **with prefix and suffix:** overruns, overrunning, outruns, outrunning, forerunners, reruns, rerunning, roadrunners, frontrunner, frontrunners.

The words in the word family are created by **affixes** being attached to the root word. When teaching root words, affixes which work with them should also be taught.

Note on "word families": This term is sometimes applied to any grouping of words that have the same vowel sound and contain the same short sequence of letters, often at the end, for example, in English, *ake* is part of words like "awake", "bake", "cake", "fake", "make", "rake", "snake", "take"

Suffixes in English

English suffixes are divided into two categories: inflectional and derivative.

Inflectional suffixes minimally change the meaning of the base word. and do not change the word category (part of speech).

Examples of inflectional suffixes are -ing, -ed, and -s or -es, and the possessive -s, comparative -er and superlative -est.

The meaning difference between "walk" and "walked" is small. "Walk" and "walked" are similar enough that learners can easily understand the difference.

Derivational affixes include -able, -er, -ish, -less, -ly, -ness, -th, -y, non-, un-, -al, -ation, -ess, -ful, -ism, -ist, -ity, -ize/-ise, -ment, in-

Derivational suffixes do change the meaning of the base or word root and its word category (part of speech)..

Examples of derivational suffixes are -tion, -ous, -ite, and -or.

The meaning difference between "govern" and "governor" is significant. The part of speech changes from a verb ("to govern") to a noun ("one who governs").

Learning suffixes can be difficult. This is because some suffixes have more abstract meanings than prefixes.

affix: is a morpheme that is added to the base word (or stem or root of a word) and modifies or extends its meaning or function. A prefix appears at the front of a word, an infix inside the word and a suffix at the end of a word.

prefix: prefixes are word parts that attach to the beginning of a word or word base to produce a related word or an inflectional form of a word, for example the *in-* in "informal".

infix: infixes are inserted into a word or word base. They are rare in English but common in African languages.

suffix: a suffix is a mopheme added to the ending of a word to change its meaning or grammatical function, for example *-ing* in "ending".

Prefixes in English

There are relatively few prefixes in English – about 20 account for most prefixed words in school level English texts and four of them account for about 60% of the use of prefixes:

un- = not or reversal or cancellation of an action or state

re- = again

in- = not, without or in, into, towards, inside

dis- = not or opposite

Compound words

Compound words have at least two unbound morphemes.

In some compound words the two morphemes retain their original meaning, e.g. bluebird, doghouse, housemaid, shotgun, airman

In others a new meaning is produced, e.g. airline, butterfly.

A morphemic analysis strategy related to morphemes, roots, and affixes

Honig *et al* (2018, p. 491) give an example of a morphemic analysis:

Using word-part clues to derive word meaning		
Step	**Action**	**Example word: "disagreement"**
1	Look for the Word Root. What does it mean?	agree = to have the same opinion
2	Look for a Prefix. What does it mean?	dis = not or opposite
3	Look for a Suffix. What does it mean?	ment = state or quality of something
4	Put the meanings of the word parts together. What is the meaning of the whole word?	dis + agree + ment = state or quality of not having the same opinion

Unit 4: Self test questions

1. Briefly describe morphemic analysis as an aid in understanding the meaning of words.
2. Name two classical languages which provide the word roots in many English words.
3. What is a word family?
4. Give at least six examples of words in the word family based on the English word base "work".
5. Find the meaning of these prefixes in English and give an example of each in a word: bi-, inter-, mis-, mono-, non-, pre-, post-, semi-, super-.

5. Word learning strategies: contextual analysis

Contextual analysis can either look for clues as to the meaning of words in the text or look for clues outside the text (making use of general and more specialised background knowledge).

Using contextual clues in the text

The reader can use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding.

[Note that in the early stages of learning to read, the using of contextual clues and illustrations and then guessing as a substitute for the phonetic decoding of words that are in their spoken vocabulary is not to be encouraged.]

When a learner comes across an unfamiliar word, a new word in their vocabulary, clues can be looked for in the surrounding text to help **infer** the meaning of the word. There may be words or phrases in the text that provide **clues** as to the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Punctuation – commas, quatation marks, etc. – can sometimes also provide **cues**.

Often in textbooks and children's literature the writer has deliberately provided helpful context clues (Honig *et al*, 2018, p. 499):

Type	Description	Example sentence
Definition	The author provides a direct definition of an unfamiliar word, right in the sentence.	A **hawser** is a rope or cable used in mooring or towing a ship.
	Signal words: is, are, means, refers to	
Appositive definition	This type of definition is a word or phrase that defines or explains an unfamiliar word that comes before it.	At night you can see **constellations**, or groups of stars, in the sky.
	Signal word: or	
	Signal punctuation: set off by commas	
Synonym	The author uses another word or phrase that is similar in meaning, or can be compared, to an unfamiliar word.	My friend's dog travels everywhere with him and my **canine** does the same.
	Signal words: also, as, identical, like, likewise, resembling, same, similarly, too	I thought the television show was funny and my father also thought it was **hilarious**.

context: the text or speech that comes immediately before and after a particular phrase or piece of text and may help understanding of its meaning.

More broadly, context is the background, environment, setting, situation, circumstances, framework, or surroundings of events, occurrences or statements. So context is everything that exists in the surroundings or situation of something and influences it.

inference: making a guess or forming an opinion based on the information that you have available

clue: something that provides information needed to solve a problem or mystery or to point the way to a destination

cue: a signal giving meaningful information about when something should occur such as the start or end of some action

Antonym	The author uses another word or phrase that means the opposite of, or is in contrast with, the unfamiliar word.	I hoped the story would make me **happy** but instead it made me **miserable**.
	Signal words: but, however, in contrast, instead of, on the other hand, though, unlike	
Examples	The author provides several words or ideas that are examples of an unfamiliar word.	In science we are studying **cetaceans,** marine mammals such as whales, dolphins and porpoises
	Signal words: for example, for instance, including, like, such as	
General	The author gives several clues to the meaning of an unfamiliar word, often spread over several sentences.	He was a great **athlete.** He won his first prize for running, his second for the long jump, and his third for the high jump.

Guessing the meaning of a word with the help of general knowledge

Sometimes relying on contextual clues within the text simply does not work. There are no definitions, synonyms, antonyms or examples. However, there is usually some contextual information that indicates what the text as a whole is about. This is where general knowledge comes in and is so important. For example, if the text is about some sporting event, the reader may have some general knowledge about sport in general or on the particular sport. Words in a text about sport could be about the rules of the game, the kind of field or court it is played on, the clothes worn, the typical activities – kicking, running, batting, tackling, scoring, and so on. From the store of words, the **lexicon**, that the reader has in his or her general knowledge base, guesses can be made about what the unfamiliar word is likely to represent.

lexicon: a lexicon, word-hoard, word-book, or word-stock is the vocabulary of a person, language, or branch of knowledge. In practical terms it is a list of all words known about a particular subject or area of knowledge.

Reading with understanding is highly dependent on our using these general background knowledge clues from outside the text (in addition to the specialised academic content that has to be learned during the years of school). Teachers should provide regular opportunities for learners to gain new information about the world – and the new words that go with this knowledge – and connect it to their prior knowledge so that it is meaningful.

This general knowledge also has a cultural component. A child needs to have a 'cultural literacy' that includes the words and ideas that characterise a particular society and are reflected in its literature, customs and art and other media (Hirsch, 1987, 2004, Hirsch *et al.*, 2002).

Much general knowledge learning is incidental. Incidental learning is the learning we pick up even when we are not specifically trying to learn, as is the case with most learning before children attend school.

All teachers should have a commitment to building up the general knowledge of children, particularly in the earlest years of school. In those Foundation years, when young children are still learning relatively little from their independent reading, they have to learn from listening to the teacher reading to them and from other classroom interactions.

It is often helpful to engage in group guessing about the meaning of a word they do not know because it can make use of often very different kinds of background knowledge possessed by the individual children in the class. This should only take place after the word has been decoded phonetically and said aloud (and the teacher can correct the pronunciation) and morphically analysed.

Reading comprehension relies on good background knowledge. Good teaching in the subjects children have to study will increase their vocabulary knowledge and therefore their reading proficiency.

Combining contextual and morphemic analysis

Honig *et al* (2018, pp. 555-559) give an example of a combined strategy that brings together contextual and morphemic analysis in understanding the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

1	Look for context clues in the words, phrases and sentences surrounding the unfamiliar word.
2	Look for word-part clues within the unfamiliar word.
	• Try to break the word up into its mophemes.
	• Look at the word root. What is its meaning?
	• Look at the prefix. What does it mean?
	• Look at the suffix. What does it mean?
	• Put these separate part meanings together. What is the meaning of the whole word?
3	Guess the meaning of the word based on steps 1 and 2.
4	Try out this guessed meaning in the original sentence. Does it make sense in this context?
5	Use a dictionary.

Unit 5: Self test questions

1. What is a context?
2. Describe how a reader can use contextual clues to get the meaning of words.

6. Word learning strategies: dictionary use

Learners need to be able to check the meaning of words that are new to them or which may have multiple meanings, some of which are unknown to them. They have to become familiar with using dictionaries and other reference works to assist in this enrichment of vocabulary and to regularise their spelling of them.

Further vocabulary development comes from independent reading and for this children have to learn how to use the appropriate dictionary procedures on their own.

To look up words, one first has to know the order of letters in the alphabet. As this order has no meaning in itself it simply has to be learned by **rote** and children should be tested that they know all the letters and their order.

rote learning: the memorisation of material that does not in itself have much meaning. Good examples are alphabetical order, multiplication tables, and telephone numbers. The memorization is mainly done done by repetition.

Teaching dictionary use

There are a number of dictionaries specially designed for primary school use. In the case of English dictionaries, particularly where the learners are not mother-tongue English speakers it is best to use a dictionary that has a limited defining vocabulary (that is, the words used to define and explain the meaning of other words come from a list of the most commonly used English words).

The basic skills

These are:

- Use alphabetical order to find the words starting with the first letter of the word.
- Use alphabetical order within the word to locate the word (working from second to third letter and so on).
- Use the guide words (at the top of the left hand and right hand pages) that indicate the first word on the left hand page and the last word on the right hand page) to help you locate the correct word.
- Check to see if there are several entries for that word.
- With each entry read all the entries for the word.
- Select the meaning that makes most sense, given the contextual clues in the text where the word appears.

Depending on the particular dictionary, there may be abbreviations saying which part of speech the word is (noun, verb, etc.) and the separation of the word into syllables to aid pronunciation. Most dictionaries have guidelines on how to use them in the front pages.

Differences in how English and African languages alphabetise

Because of the differences in language structure between English and the African languages, words in the dictionaries may be alphabetised in different ways.

In English, words stand alone and the first letter of the word is used to place it in alphabetical order. So in an English dictionary you know that the word "father" will be listed with words starting with an "f". In the African languages where nouns have class prefixes, the word may be filed as a word stem or as a full word. Thus in isiZulu the word for father may be listed as "-baba" or as "ubaba". It is likely that African language dictionaries for young learners will increasingly move towards the whole word position (de Schryver, 2010). Whatever the case, the learners need to be shown how the words are alphabetically ordered in the dictionary they use.

Finding the meaning of words on the internet

Leaners seeking definitions of words can, of course, easily find them on the internet, using a search engine such as DuckDuckGo, Google or Bing on a cellphone or computer. Although in a sense easier to do than paging through a dictionary, it comes with hazards – multiple dictionary sources with different United Kingdom and North American spellings. (In South African usage English spelling usually conforms to United Kingdom norms.) Effective internet use requires some search engine usage skills.

Thesauri and other resources

In the Senior Phase and in preparation for high school the learners should at least be informed on what a thesaurus is and how it can be used as a resource for selecting effective and precise vocabulary and finding alternatives to overused words in writing. There are several online thesauri.

Unit 6: Self test questions

1. Identify the following on this example entry from the top of a page in an English dictionary:

   guide word / part of speech / pronunciation guide / different meanings of the word /etymology of the word

gasket | -gate

gasket /ˈgaskɪt/ > **n**. **1** a sheet or ring of rubber or other material sealing the junction between two surfaces in an engine or other device. **2** archaic a cord securing a furled sail to the yard of a sailing ship.
— ORIGIN C17: perh. from Fr. garcette 'thin rope' (orig. 'little girl').

7. Academic language vocabularies

Learning to use the formal speech of school is a necessary part of the educational development of children. This academic language differs from their normal everyday language use. It is the language used in classroom lessons, textbooks, tests, and assignments. Understanding this academic language is sometimes called "Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency" (CALP) as distinct from the language of the everyday "Basic Interpersonal Communication" (BICS). This becomes particularly important in the Intermediate and Senior Phases where new 'academic language' words are introduced that children may not at first understand. In high school and in higher education the use of academic language becomes even more important.

So the teaching of a set of "school" or "academic" words is important.

These academic words mainly appear in written texts and are increasingly necessary for the literacy practices engaged in school study as children advance through the grades. They include general school/academic words that occur frequently in most subjects, subject specific terms, and the literary vocabulary that appears in literature but not much in everyday life.

Some of the norms of this academic language may be very different to the home language and cultural norms of the learners. Few children arrive at school fully competent in the language required for academic text interpretation. It is important that the teacher be consciously aware of these academic language norms so that they can help children understand what is expected of them, especially as many of these academic words are used in assessment questions – words like "describe", "analyse", "list", "define", "evaluate", "illustrate" – and they specify very precisely what tasks the child has to perform to answer the questions.

As children progress through the grades they will need to acquire the vocabulary, grammar and punctuation and strategies for the more complex and precise language required in speaking and in writing extended, reasoned texts in schools.

Teachers have to use a variety of methods and strategies to teach students the vocabularies and usage norms of academic language in the content areas and to help them incorporate these norms in their classroom usage of language. This is especially true for English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners.

Learning of academic vocabulary can be done through direct teaching and appropriate listening, reading and writing exercises. Often the academic vocabulary can be introduced in explaining what children have to do in exercises, presentations, tests and assignments.

An important part of acquiring a vocabulary suitable for academic work is learning how to break up (or **parse**) new words into their constituent parts and morphemes, rather than simply treating complex words as long words.

parse: to describe a word by stating its part of speech, form and relationship to the syntax of the sentence it is in. To parse a sentence is to break the sentence into its component parts of speech such as subject, verb, object, with an explanation of the form, function, and syntactical relationship of each part.

There are a number of useful academic word lists available, though most of them are at a tertiary level, such as that of Coxhead (1998) available at:

https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist

and also at:

https://simple.wiktionary.org/wiki/Wiktionary:Academic_word_list

One list suitable for the higher primary grades is:

https://primarycolour.home.blog/2019/06/14/tier-two-vocabulary-for-primary-teachers-the-3-4-5-list/

Unit 7: Self test questions

1. What do the abbreviations CALP and BICS stand for?
2. Why is it important for children to understand the academic language words used in assessment questions?
3. Explain what it is to parse a word or a sentence.
4. This is the first set of the most high frequency academic words in English in Coxhead's ***Academic Word List***. Which of these words do you think it reasonable to expect primary school children to know by the end of the Senior Phase (if their main language of instruction is English)?

   sector • available • financial • process • individual • specific • principle • estimate • variables • method • data • research • contract • environment • export • source • assessment • policy • identified • create • derived • factors • procedure • definition • assume • theory • benefit • evidence • established • authority • major • issues • labour • occur • economic • involved • percent • interpretation • consistent • income • structure • legal • concept • formula • section • required • constitutional • analysis • distribution • function • area • approach • role • legislation • indicate • response • period • context • significant • similar

8. Assessing vocabulary knowledge

The teacher should know what vocabulary learners need to know to be able to read and write effectively within and across the relevant grades and subjects. The teacher also needs to know how to assess the learners' progress in doing so. Without this assessment the teacher will not know how much vocabulary learning has actually taken place.

Vocabulary assessment (including word roots, prefixes, suffixes, word derivations, etc. as appropriate for the particular language) is to be done on a regular basis and take into account the CAPS recommendations.

In deciding what methods to use for assesment the teacher has to know what they are assessing and why. Vocabulary assessment is a broad field as shown in this table which outlines what 'knowing' words implies.

What knowing a word involves – form, meaning and use

Aspect	Component	Receptive knowledge	Productive knowledge
Form	Spoken	What does the word sound like?	How is the word pronounced?
	Written	What does the word look like?	How is the word written and spelled?
	Word parts	What parts are recognizable in this word?	What word parts are needed to express the meaning?
Meaning	Form and meaning	What meaning does this word form signal?	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	Concepts and Referents	What is included in this concept?	What items can the concept refer to?
	Associations	What other words does this word make people think of?	What other words could people use instead of this one?
Use	Grammatical functions	In what patterns does this word occur?	In what patterns must people use this word?
	Collocations	What words or types of words occur with this one?	What words or types of words must people use with this one?
	Constraints on use (register, frequency ...)	Where, when, and how often would people expect to find this word?	Where, when, and how often can people use this word?

Source: Adapted from Nation (2001, p. 27)

Vocabulary assessment can take many forms. Will it be done formally or informally? Will the vocabulary be isolated words in a list or embedded within the context of a text? Will only the passive vocabulary be tested or also how the learner makes use of the vocabulary they know in speech or writing?

referent: the person, thing, event or idea that a word, phrase, or symbol refers to

collocation: common word combinations, that is, a series of words or terms that co-occur more often than would be expected by chance, e.g., "bright idea", "strong drink".

cloze test: a test consisting of a portion of text with certain words or phrases removed, which the learner has to fill in. Cloze tests require the ability to understand context and vocabulary in order to identify the correct word or phrase that belongs in the omitted parts.

There are a huge range of methods to assess vocabulary knowledge and practice including multiple choice questions, (MCQ) cloze (fill in the missing word) tests, sentence and paragraph writing, etc. (Reed, 2010).

Assessments can include:

- Checking how many words the children know (oral questioning and word collecting)
- Choosing the correct word (MCQ, cloze)
- Choosing between similar words (MCQ)
- Defining words (MCQ, sentences, paragraphs)
- Translating a word into the home language
- Choosing a word to match a definition
- Choosing a definition to match a word
- Demonstrating decontextualized knowledge of a word's meaning, its relationship to other words, and extensions to metaphorical uses
- Forming new words with affixes
- Explaining the parts that make up the word (affixes, word root, inflections)
- Making a word map (a graphic representation of a word with its various forms, synonyms, antonyms, examples, non-examples, etc.)
- Applying the appropriate word in context
- Identifing examples and non-examples of a word or its use (e.g. a crow is an example of a bird, a bat is not)
- Saying if a word is used correctly in a sentence
- Demonstrating knowledge of multiple meanings of a word
- Identify a synonym or antonym for a word (in isolation or in a sentence context)
- Choosing an appropriate word or phrases to use in particular social situations, for example, apologizing or being introduced to somebody
- Listing all the words relating to a topic or category of things - requires situating the word within a system of ideas
- Choosing all the words related to a topic or category of things out of a larger list of words
- Discussing the vocabulary in a reading comprehension
- Keeping a word journal
- Checking whether the learners are applying new words in discussion, writing and in tests

Assessment rubrics

Various marking rubrics can be used to guide the assessment. There are many examples of such rubrics available on the internet. Here are some examples showing the typical sort of format of such guides to asessment:

Spelling and defining words and putting them in a sentence	
Good	Appears to have full understanding of the vocabulary words and writes each vocabulary word correctly and writes a full sentence using it correctly. An example and a definition of the vocabulary word are provided that correctly explain the meaning of the word.
Fair	Appears to have partial understanding of the vocabulary words and though writes each vocabulary word correctly writes an incomplete sentence. An example and definition may be incomplete.
Partial	Appears to have a very partial understanding of the vocabulary words and though writes each vocabulary correctly cannot write a sentence using it, nor give an example or a definition.
Inadequate	Attempts to write the correct words but they are misspelled. The learner cannot write a full sentence, using a word, give an example of its use, or define the word.
Fails	The learner does not attempt the assignment at all.

Use a set of pre-selected vocabulary words in a paragraph	
Excellent	Uses all words appropriately in a paragraph written with a grade appropriate vocabulary.
Good	Uses most words appropriately in a paragraph written with mostly grade appropriate vocabulary.
Fair	About half the words used appropriately in a paragraph written with a one grade lower vocabulary.
Poor	Less than a third of the words used appropriately in a paragraph written with a two or lower grade level vocabulary.
Fails	The learner does not attempt the assignment at all.

General Primary level vocabulary assessment				
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Match words to their definitions	Few	Some	Most	All
Complete sentences with vocabulary words that are grade appropriate, correct, and use new words and expressions whether general or subject specific	Few	Some vocabulary words	Most vocabulary words	All
Write definitions	Few	Some	Most	All
Write original sentences using the words	Few	Some	Most	All
Spelling, capitalization and punctuation	Often incorrect	Sometimes incorrect	Mainly correct	All correct

Assessment activities must be built upon a sound base of the reading of texts and of the learners' interacting with others in the use of new vocabulary. Unless learners have frequent encounters with each new word they cannot build up their vocabulary knowledge to nay depth.

Assessment of vocabulary must be based upon reasonable expectations given the amount of time given to the reading of texts and discussion about those texts to develop comprehension and vocabulary.

The testing of vocabulary must include the knowledge and use of word roots, prefixes, suffixes, word derivations, etc. as appropriate for the particular language.

Every day the teacher should do something playful with words. The way the classroom is organised and decorated should show that vocabulary learning is alive – with word charts and posters, both teacher and learner generated, placed where learners can see them as they write. In early grade classrooms objects should be labelled. There should be word games and puzzles available for use.

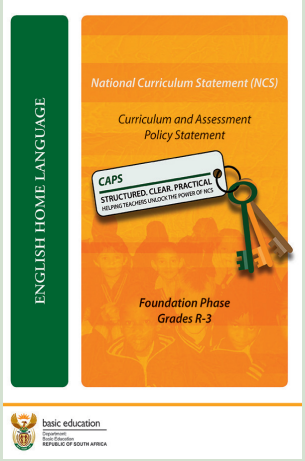
Unit 8: Self test questions

1. On page 30 there is a list of 22 assessment techniques. How familiar are you with these techniques? Consider whether you would be able to implement them.
2. What word parts are recognisable in the English word "unfortunately"? Use an English dictionary if necessary.

9. Planning vocabulary development

An organised teacher has to plan for vocabulary development across the school year and groups of teachers have to plan for development across the primary school phases in both home language and first additional language. This planning will have to take into account the reading texts and workbooks that are available in the school or obtainable elsewhere.

Teachers in the Intermediate and Senior Phase must never assume that teaching vocabulary is something only done in the Foundation Phase. This is made clear in the ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*** for Home languages which sets clear targets for vocabulary learning in the Intermediate Phase (Department of Basic Education, 2011b, p. 33):



	Term	1	2	3	4
Common spoken words	Grade 4	1700-2500	1850-3000	2000-3500	3500-4000
	Grade 5	2400-4000	2700-4250	3000-4500	4500-5000
	Grade 6	3500-5000	3700-5250	4000-5500	5500-6000
Reading vocabulary (new words)	Grade 4	800-1900	900-2200	1000-2500	2500-3000
	Grade 5	1500-3000	1750-3300	2000-3500	3500-4000
	Grade 6	2200-3800	2400-4200	2700-4600	3000-5000

Although it is right to target the learning of an appropriate number of new words in each grade, it must be emphasized that mastery of vocabulary is a gradual, context dependent, lifetime process of growth. Word learning happens bit by bit and each repeated encounter with a word adds to the depth of understanding its meaning. It takes time for learners to move from having no understanding of a word to having some passive hold over it to finally being able to situate it in various contexts and use it accurately in spoken and written communication.

To develop vocabulary the teacher has to do five essential things (Texas Education Agency, 2002):

- encourage wide reading
- expose students to high-quality oral language (through reading aloud and discussion)
- promote an interest and curiosity about words – developing 'word consciousness'
- provide explicit instruction of specific words
- teach and model independent word-learning strategies.

All these activities need to be done in a sensible sequence over the school grades as outlined in the various CAPS language documents and as exemplified in the following example for Grades R to 3.

Sequencing vocabulary steps
Reception year
Concept naming and use
Names pictures of common concepts
Uses words to describe location, size, colour and shape
Uses names and labels of basic concepts
Categorization
Identifies and sorts pictures of common words into basic categories
Vocabulary development and use
Learns new vocabulary through stories and instruction
Listens to new vocabulary in multiple contexts to understand its use
Uses newly learned vocabulary on multiple occasions
First Grade
Concept categorization
Sorts grade appropriate words with or without pictures into categories
Vocabulary development and use
Learns and uses unfamiliar words introduced in stories and informational passages
Increases knowledge of word meanings and uses new vocabulary
Second Grade
Concept categorization
Classifies and categorizes words into sets and groups
Vocabulary development and use
Learns and uses unfamiliar words that are introduced in stories and texts
Understands and explains common antonyms and synonyms
Increases knowledge of vocabulary through independent reading
Uses new vocabulary
Examines word usage and effectiveness to expand descriptive vocabulary
Makes inferences about the meaning of a word based on its use in a sentence
Uses word structure to learn meaning
ldentifies simple multiple-meaning words
Third Grade
Concept categorization
Classifies and categorizes increasingly complex words into sets and groups
Categorizes words in a conceptual hierarchy
Draws and uses semantic maps and organizers to convey word relations
Vocabulary development and use
Learns and uses unfamiliar words that are introduced in stories and passages
Increases knowledge of vocabulary through independent reading
Uses new vocabulary
Uses more descriptive vocabulary
Determines the meaning of a word based on its use in a sentence
Uses dictionary to determine word meaning
Uses knowledge of prefixes and sufixes to help determine word meaning

Source: University of Oregon, n.d.

Ideally, primary school teachers need to get together and agree on the essential vocabulary to be taught in each grade, including common words, general academic vocabulary used frequently across subjects, subject specific vocabulary and literary vocabulary that is not often used in everyday speech but is in the literature the learners will study.

In planning what words to teach explicitly, the teacher can make use of the words in the readers or other texts the children use and can also use lists of the most common high-frequency words used in texts in the particular language.

Word lists of high frequency words

High frequency word lists related to school grades are usually based on the words used in contemporary reading texts used by each grade. Teachers need to know how and where to access lists of grade appropriate high frequency words, high frequency cross-subject content words and academic words that they can teach and use in class. Many of these words need to be explicitly taught, especially to struggling readers.

There are word lists available for most languages, including the South African ones, e.g. at:

https://vulabula.molteno.co.za/readers_by_language/189/all

The Foundation Phase CAPS language publications give a list of the first 100 high frequency words of the language (300 in the case of English).

Learners are generally advised to learn short high frequency words first. This will speed up automatised reading and result in better reading comprehension. However this does not necessarily mean that children should only learn simple words first. Nor does direct vocabulary instruction need to wait until children have learned to read well enough to fluently decode the words they are learning.

English sight words in the early grades

When the language is English, we have so-called sight words.

These English sight words are a small collection of words that a child should learn to recognise without sounding out the letters. They are some of the most commonly used in English but are very hard to decode phonetically – such as "the" and "said" – which have irregular spelling patterns. Good examples are "the", "was", "as", "it", "said", "eye", "knock", "knife" and "island" which cannot be sounded out using basic phonics knowledge and often cannot be represented using pictures.

The only way to 'read' these words is to identify them as sight words having memorising their correct pronunciation. Knowledge of these sight words should be reinforced by spelling them correctly.

With the African languages it is not necessary to memorise sight words as all the words have regular spelling and are easily decodable. (It is of course advantageous for such African language readers to to identify frequently used words.)

Unit 9: Self test questions

1. How would you deal with the problem of differences in the number of words known by children in a Grade 1 or other primary school phase classroom.
2. Explain the distinction between high frequency words and sight words.
3. How would you identify the high frequency words in the reading texts used in a Foundation Phase classroom (and also the sight words in English texts).
4. Where would be a good place to find examples of academic language words in use in a school?

10. Vocabulary resources

Books

Grade appropriate and engaging books are key for vocabulary development.

Word lists

Teachers need to know how and where to access lists of grade appropriate high frequency words, high frequency school subject content words and general academic words that they can teach and use in class (Nation, 2016; Lawrence *et al*, 2010). Many of these words need to be explicitly taught, especially to struggling readers and EFAL learners. (Nation, 2005, 2016).

In English there is the well-known Dale-Chall list (Chall and Dale, 1995) and the earlier Fry word list (1980).

Academic word lists

Although academic word lists are important mainly at the FET and Higher Education levels, it is useful to have access to them in the Senior Phase. One list suitable for the higher primary grades is:

https://primarycolour.home.blog/2019/06/14/tier-two-vocabulary-for-primary-teachers-the-3-4-5-list/

Dictionaries, glossaries and thesauri

Teachers should know how to teach dictionary use and, for EFAL learners, to recommend so-called English learners' dictionaries which use a restricted defining vocabulary. The most useful dictionaries include example sentences of word meanings in context, particularly when a word has several meanings. They usually have a guide to how to use the dictionary. Teachers should also be familiar with print and online visual dictionaries. Glossaries and thesauri can be used to broaden and deepen learners' knowledge of words in the Senior Phase.

Vocabulary development plans and programmes

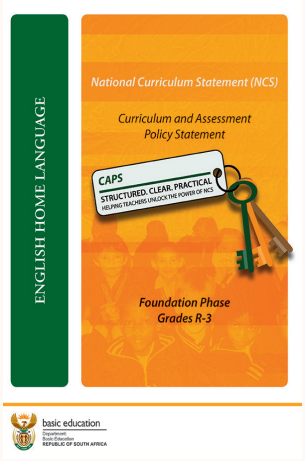
There are a large number of vocabulary development plans and resources on the internet (mainly English of course), some from public institutions, like this one:

http://oregonliteracypd.uoregon.edu/topic/vocabulary-development

and others from commercial suppliers (often the publishers of reading texts, like this one.:

https://www.education.com/lesson-plans/building-vocabulary/

Vocabulary development in curriculum guides



The CAPS for the various South African languages, both as home languages and as First Additional Languages provide substantial descriptions of how and when to teach vocabulary.

For English, the United Kingdom's Department for Education has useful guides to spelling and vocabulary (Department for Education, 2014, 2013a, 2013b).

Unit 10: Self test questions

1. Find a list of English sight words suitable for grade 1.
2. Find a list of high frequency words in your mother tongue.
3. Look at the range of learner readers in your home language on the Department of Basic Education website (https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/LearningandTeachingSupportMaterials(LTSM)/GradedReadersandBigBookHL.aspx).
4. Look at the range of readers in your home language on the African Storybook website (https://africanstorybook.org/).
5. Find a dictionary prescribed for home language learners in a primary school and have a look at its introductory pages on how to use the dictionary.

11. Special issue - English vocabulary

Apart from the general need to build up English vocabulary, the teacher needs to pay special attention to the learning and spelling of words with similar sounds but different spelling patterns. Being able to spell words when writing is more difficult in English because of its complex spelling rules. In the African languages and Afrikaans it is much easier to code words in writing.

Although English is commonly described as having irregular spelling, many of the "irregularities" obey certain rules that owe their origin to the different language sources (British, Anglo-Saxon, Norse, Norman French, Latin, Greek, and other languages) in the evolution of the English language. About 60% of all English words have Latin or Greek origins. Knowledge of these irregular spelling patterns helps learners to read new words.

To understand these English spelling complexities teachers need to have some understanding of the morphology of English and that meaningful word parts include **base words** and **word roots**, and affixes (prefixes and suffixes but no infixes) that can help learners grasp the meanings of many new words.

Base words are words that are not derived from other words. They are the word from which many other words are formed. For example, many words can be formed from the root Latin word "*migr*" (to move): migrate: migration, migrant, immigration, immigrant, migrating, and migratory.

Word roots include those from other languages such as Latin or Greek that are the origin of many English words. They are frequently found in content-area school subjects, especially in the sciences and social studies. Teachers should teach the more common root words that learners are likely to see often and teach other word roots as they occur in the textbooks.

Affixes are word units that are "fixed to" either the beginnings of words (**prefixes**) or inside words (**infixes**) or the ending of words (**suffixes**). English does not have infixes, African languages do. The word "disrespectful" has two affixes, a prefix (dis-) and a suffix (-ful). Explicitly teaching about these affixes and the way affixes relate to them dramatically enhances a learner's vocabulary. For example, teaching that the prefix dis- can mean "not" or "opposite of" makes it easier to remember the meanings of "disrespect", "dishonour", "disagree", "disinvest", etc.

If learners know the four most common prefixes in English (un-, re-, in-, and dis-), they will have important clues about the meaning of about two thirds of all English words that have prefixes. Prefixes are relatively easy to learn because they have clear meanings (for example, un- means "not" and re- means "again"); they are usually spelled the same way in different words.

Suffixes are divided into two categories:

- **Inflectional** suffixes minimally change the meaning of the base word. Examples of inflectional suffixes are -ing, -ed, and -s or -es. The difference

word root: a morpheme that expresses the basic meaning of a word and cannot be further divided into smaller morphemes. Some roots can stand alone and some cannot. Many word roots are identical to word bases.

word base: a morpheme or set of morphemes, which is itself a meaningful stand alone word, and from which other words can be created by the addition of affixes of any kind.

affix: is a morpheme that is added to the base word or stem or root of a word and modifies its meaning. A prefix appears at the front of a word, an infix inside the word and a suffix at the end of a word.

prefix: prefixes are word parts that attach to the beginning of a word or base word (a word stripped down to its simplest form) to produce a related word or an inflectional form of a word, for example the in- in "informal".

infix: infixes are inserted into a word or word base. They are rare in English but common in African languages.

suffix: a suffix is a letter or group of letters added to the ending of a word to change its meaning or grammatical function. for example -ing in "ending".

inflection: a change in the form of a word (typically the ending) to express a grammatical function or attribute such as tense, mood, person, number, case, and gender.

in meaning between "walk" and "walked" is minimal. Walk and walked are similar enough that learners can easily understand the difference. Inflectional endings are easily taught to younger learners.

- Derivational suffixes change the meaning of the word base or root word. Examples of derivational suffixes are -tion, -ous, -ite, and -or. The meaning difference between "govern" and "governor" is significant. The part of speech changes from a verb ("to govern") to a noun ("one who governs").

Learning suffixes can be difficult. This is because some suffixes have more abstract meanings than prefixes.

Many word roots in English come from other languages such as Latin or Greek that are the origin of many English words. They are frequently found in content-area school subjects, especially in the sciences and social studies. Teachers should teach the more common root words that learners are likely to see often and teach other word roots as they occur in the textbooks.

Unit 11: Self test questions

1. Explain the grammatical difference between the two articles in English giving examples.
2. How can word bases or roots help readers decode unknown words and improve vocabulary?
3. What is the meaning of the four most common English prefixes?
   un- _____
   re- _____
   in- _____
   dis- _____
4. Briefly explain the origin of the complex spelling system in English.

References

Archer, A. 2006. ***Dynamic vocabulary instruction in the Elementary school.*** Oregon: University of Oregon
Retrieved from:
http://oregonreadingfirst.uoregon.edu/downloads/instruction/big_five/dynamic_vocab_aa.pdf

Baumann, J.F., Edwards, E.C., Boland, E.M., Olejnik, S., and Kame'enui, E.J. 2003. *Vocabulary Tricks: Effects of instruction in morphology and context on fifth-grade students' ability to derive and infer word meanings*. ***American Educational Research Journal***, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 447-494
Retrieved from:
https://doi.org/10.3102%2F00028312040002447

Baumann, J.F., Font, G., Edwards, E.C. and Boland, E. 2005. *Strategies for teaching middle-grade students to use word-part and context clues*. In: Hiebert, E.H. and Kamil, M.I. (Eds). 2005. ***Teaching and learning vocabulary: Bringing research to practice***. Mahwah, New Jersey: Erlbaum

Beck, I.L. and McKeon, M.G. 1985. Teaching vocabulary: *Making the instruction fit the goal*. ***Educational Perspectives,*** Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 111-15

Beck, I.L., McKeown, MG., and Kucan, L. 2013. ***Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction***. 2nd Edition. New York: Guilford

Biemiller, A. 2005. *Size and sequence in vocabulary development: Implications for choosing words for primary grade vocabulary instruction*. In: Herbert, E.H. and Kamil, M.L. (Eds). 2005. ***Teaching and learning vocabulary: Bringing research to practice***. Mahwah, New Jersey: Erlbaum

Blachowicz, C. and Peter Fisher, P. 2011. A *Word for the Words*. ***Educational Leadership***, Volume 68, Number 6, March 2011
Retrieved from:
http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar11/vol68/num06/A-Word-for-the-Words.aspx

Coxhead, A. J. 1998. ***An academic word list*** (English Language Institute Occasional Publication No. 18). Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University of Wellington

Dale-Chall List (Chall, J.S. and Dale, E. 1995. ***Readability revisited: The new Dale-Chall readability formula***. Brookline, Massachusetts: Brookline Books).

de Schryver, G-M. 2010. *Revolutionising Bantu lexicography – a Zulu case study*. ***Lexicos***, Vol. 20, pp. 161-201
Retrieved from:
https://tshwanedje.com/publications/Zulu-Gram.pdf

Department of Basic Education. 2011a. ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy. Foundation Phase. Grades R-3. English Home Language***. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education
Retrieved from:
https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/CD/National%20Curriculum%20Statements%20and%20Vocational/CAPS%20English%20HL%20GRADES%20R-3%20FS.pdf?ver=2015-01-27-154201-167

Department of Basic Education. 2011b. ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy. Intermediate Phase Grades 4-6. English Home Language***. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education
Retrieved from:
https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/CD/National%20Curriculum%20Statements%20and%20Vocational/CAPS%20IP%20%20HOME%20ENGLISH%20GR%204-6%20%20WEB.pdf?ver=2015-01-27-160412-720

Department of Basic Education. 2011c. ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy. Senior Phase Grades 7-9. English Home Language***. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education
Retrieved from:
https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/CD/National%20Curriculum%20Statements%20and%20Vocational/CAPS%20SP%20%20HL%20%20ENGLISH%20GR%207-9%20%20web.pdf?ver=2015-01-27-155553-090

Department of Basic Education. 2011d. ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy. Foundation Phase Grades 1-3. English First Additional Language***. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education
Retrieved from:
https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/CD/National%20Curriculum%20Statements%20and%20Vocational/CAPS%20ENGLISH%20FAL%20GR%201-3%20FS.pdf?ver=2015-01-27-155321-957

Department of Basic Education. 2020. ***National Framework for the Teaching of reading in African Languages in the Foundation Phase***. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education
Retrieved from:
https://www.jet.org.za/clearinghouse/projects/primted/curriculum-frameworks/literacy-curriculum-frameworks/national-framework-for-the-teaching-of-reading-in-african-languages-in-the-fp-201907.pdf

Department of Education. 2013a. ***English appendix 1: spelling***. Manchester: Department for Education
Retrieved from:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239784/English_Appendix_1_-_Spelling.pdf

Department of Education. 2013b. ***English appendix 2: vocabulary, grammar and punctuation***. Manchester: Department for Education
Retrieved from:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335190/English_Appendix_2_-_Vocabulary_grammar_and_punctuation.pdf

Department of Education. 2014. ***National curriculum in England: English programmes of study***. Manchester: Department of Education https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study

Fry, 1980. ***Word Lists: Fry Instant Words***. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah State Office of Education https://schoolnotes.com/files/BCCSKA/Fry1000inwords.pdf

Hirsch, E.D. 1987. Cultural Literacy: What every American needs to know. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin

Hirsch, E.D. 2004. ***The New First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy: What your child needs to know***. Boston, Massachusetts: Mariner

Hirsch, E.D., Kett, J.F., and Trefil, T. 2002. ***The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy: What every American needs to know.*** New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Honig, B., Diamond, L., and Gutlohn, L. 2018. ***Teaching Reading Sourcebook***. Third Edition. Novato, California: Arena Press

Johnson, D.D., Moe, A.J., and Baumann, J.F. 1983. ***The Ginn word book for teachers: A basic lexicon***. Boston: Ginn

Lawrence, J.F., White, C., and Snow, C.E. 2010. *The Words Students Need.* ***Educational Leadership***, Volume 68, Number 2, pp. 23-26 Retrieved from: http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct10/vol68/num02/The-Words-Students-Need.aspx

Moat, L.C. 2005. *How spelling supports reading,* ***American Educator,*** Winter 2005/06 Retrieved from: https://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/winter-2005-2006/how-spelling-supports-reading

Nation, I.S.P. 2001. ***Learning vocabulary in another language***. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Nation, I.S.P. 2005. *Teaching vocabulary.* ***Asian EFL Journal***, September 2005 Retrieved from: https://asian-efl-journal.com/sept_05_pn.pdf

Nation, I.S.P. 2016. ***Making and using word lists for language learning and testing***. Amsterdam: John Benjamins

Read, J. 2010. ***Assessing vocabulary***. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Scarborough H. S. 2001. *Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice.* In: Neuman, S. and Dickinson, D. (Eds). 2001. ***Handbook for research in early literacy***. New York, New York: Guilford Press, pp. 97-110

Texas Education Agency. 2002. ***Promoting vocabulary development: components of effective vocabulary instruction.*** Austin, texas: Texas Education Agency
Retrieved from:
https://buildingrti.utexas.org/sites/default/files/booklets/redbk5.pdf

University of Oregon. n.d. *Sequencing Vocabulary Skills*. Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon, Center on Teaching and Learning
Retrieved from:
http://reading.uoregon.edu/big_ideas/voc/voc_sequence.php

Self test answers

Unit 1: Oral and written vocabularies

1. **In everyday speech we usually make use of only about** 400 **to** 600 **words**.
2. **Distinguish between passive and active vocabularies.**

   A passive vocabulary is the words you recognize and understand.

   The active vocabulary is the words you use in speech and writing.
3. **Indicate whether these statements are true or false.**

   All children when entering school know more or less the same number of words. False.

   Children who come from wealthy backgrounds typically have larger vocabularies. True.

   A person who wishes to study at university probably needs to know at least 10 000 words. False. [It is probably about double that – about 20 000.]
4. **Define morpheme and word root.**

   A **morpheme** is the smallest meaningful grammatical unit of a language, that cannot be further divided.

   A **word root** is a a morpheme that expresses the basic meaning of a word and cannot be further divided into smaller morphemes.
5. **Where does most learned vocabulary come from?** Reading [rather than from explicit instruction.]

Unit 2: The importance of reading in vocabulary development

1. **What percentage of the words in a text does one need to know to make sense of it, to comprehend its meaning?** About 95%.
2. **Is it true that children usually understand a new word after having it explained only once.**

   No. False. Multiple exposures to new words are usually needed.
3. **What is reading fluency?**

   Reading fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with meaningful expression. Fluent readers can recognize a high percentage of words automatically and read at an appropriate pace.

Unit 3: Explicit instruction on vocabulary

1. **Direct vocabulary instruction is particularly important for people with** weak oral language skills**.**

2. **In Grade 1 children should be taught at least two / ~~ten~~/ ~~twenty~~ words each school day.**

3. **What words should be taught first?**

   High frequency words in speech and texts. Concrete words with clear contexts.

4. **In teaching a new word what should the teacher explain?**

   The word's meaning, typical use, and meanings in various contexts.

5. **What are function words?**

   Words that hold together and help structure sentences, [for example, in English, articles like "the" and "a", conjunctions of various kinds like "and", "but", "either/ or" and "after", "however", pronouns like "he", "she", ", prepositions such as "on", "at", "outside" and auxiliary verbs such as "is", "am", "are", "will", "would".]

6. **Distinguish between an antonym and a synonym and between a simile, a metaphor and an idiom.**

   An antonym of a word is a word with an opposite meaning and a synonym is a word with the same or very similar meaning.
   A simile is a comparison of one thing with another usually using the word "like" or "as".
   A metaphor identifies one thing with another, saying that it is the other thing, without using any comparison words.
   An idiom is a phrase which carries a different meaning to the literal meaning of the words.

7. **Define a polyseme and give an example.**

   A word with several different meanings, e.g. "bright" (light) and "bright" (clever); "pitch" (throw), "pitch" (a tent), "pitch" (tar).

8. **Give an example of a homophone.**

   Bare/bear; Sea/see; Some/sum; Steal/steel, Meat/meet; etc.

Unit 4: Word learning strategies: morphemic analysis

1. **Briefly describe morphemic analysis as an aid in understanding the emaning of words.**

   Determining the meaning of a word based upon identifying the word root and its meaning and that meaning as modified by the affixes (prefixes, infixes and suffixes) attached to that word root

2. **Name two classical languages which provide the root words in many English words.**

   Greek and Latin.

3. **What is a word family?**

   A set of words all derived from one base word through inflections and/or the attachment of affixes.

4. **Give at least six examples of words in the word family based on the English word base "work".**

   working, worked, worker, rework, overwork, overworked, workman, workshop, worktime, workforce, workload, workmate, homework, housework, teamwork, woodwork, workstation, paperwork, artwork, handiwork, workable, unworkable, etc.

5. **Find the meaning of these prefixes in English and give an example of each in a word: bi, inter, mis, mono, non, pre, post, semi, super**

bi	(two)	bicycle, biped, bigamy
inter	(among, between)	internet, international, intercede
mis	(wrong, astray)	mishap, misfortune, misinformation, misbehave
mono	(only, sole)	monogamy, monosyllabic, monotone
non	(not)	nonsense, nonexistent, non-fiction
pre	(before)	prelude, prevent, prequel
post	(after)	postpone, postscript
semi	(half)	semicircle, semisphere. semidetached
super	(above, over)	supernatural, superior, supervisor

Unit 5: Word learning strategies: contextual analysis

1. **What is a context**?

   In reading or listening, the text or speech that comes immediately before and after a particular phrase or piece of text and that may help understanding of its meaning. More broadly, a context is the background situation or environment that influences some thing or event.

2. **Describe how a reader can use contextual clues to get the meaning of words.**

   The reader can look for clues in the surrounding text - definitions, explanations, synonyms and antonyms of the unknown word - and use knowledge of the particular subject or one more general background knowledge to see if the meaning fo the word can be inferred.

Unit 6: Word learning strategies: dictionary use

1. **Identify the following on this example entry from the top of a page in an English dictionary:**

   guide word / part of speech / pronunciation guide / different meanings of the word /etymology of the word

gasket | -gate

gasket /ˈgaskɪt/ > **n**. **1** a sheet or ring of rubber or other material sealing the junction between two surfaces in an engine or other device. **2** archaic a cord securing a furled sail to the yard of a sailing ship.
— ORIGIN C17: perh. from Fr. garcette 'thin rope' (orig. 'little girl').

The page heading gasket | -gate refers to the first entry on the page (gasket) and the last entry on the page (-gate).

The **n** refers to the part of speech – a noun.

The pronunciation /'gaskIt/ is given using the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Two different meanings of the word are given **1** and **2.** The second is an archaic (old fashioned) meaning.

The etymological origins of the word come from the 17th Century (C17), perhaps from a French word "garcette" meaning a thin rope which itself comes from the French term for a "little girl".

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): Speech sounds (phones) are represented by the set of symbols in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). This set of symbols represents every single known sound in human speech in all languages. These phonetic symbols in the IPA are used to represent the slightest differences between speech sounds.

Unit 7: Academic language vocabularies

1. **What do the abbreviations CALP and BICS stand for?**

   CALP: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

   BICS: Basic Interpersonal Communication

2. **Why is it important for children to understand the academic language words used in assessment questions?**

   Because they specify very precisely what tasks the child has to do to answer or respond to the question correctly.

3. **Explain what it is to parse a word or a sentence.**

   To parse a word is to describe it by stating its part of speech, form and relationship to the syntax of the sentence it is in. To parse a sentence is to break the sentence into its constituent parts of speech such as subject, verb, object, with an explanation of the form, function, and syntactical function and relationship of each part.

4. **This is the first set of the most high frequency academic words in English in Coxhead's *Academic Word List.* Which of these words do you think it reasonable to expect primary school children to know by the end of the Senior Phase (if their main language of instruction is English)?**

   sector • available • financial • process • individual • specific • principle • estimate • variables • method • data • research • contract • environment • export • source • assessment • policy • identified • create • derived • factors • procedure • definition • assume • theory • benefit • evidence • established • authority • major • issues • labour • occur • economic • involved • percent • interpretation • consistent • income • structure • legal • concept • formula • section • required • constitutional • analysis • distribution • function • area • approach • role • legislation • indicate • response • period • context • significant • similar

   My opinion is that all of them should be known.

Unit 8: Assessing vocabulary knowledge

1. **On page 30 there is a list of 22 assessment techniques. How familiar are you with them? Consider whether you would be able to implement them.**

   Your answer. If you do not feel confident that you could implement them consider consulting some books on vocabulary assessment.

2. **What word parts are recognisable in the English word "unfortunately"? Use an English dictionary if necessary.**

   There are four mophemes in "un-fortun(e)-ate-ly", three affixes (one prefix, two suffixes) plus the root morpheme:
   un - prefix meaning "not"
   fortun(e) - word root originally meaning "position in life as determined by wealth"
   ate - suffix meaning "to make"
   ly - suffix meaning "in the manner of"

   So "unfortunately" is a word meaning literally "not in the manner of making a fortune" and more broadly meaning experience of something or an event that has taken place that is sad, disappointing or unpleasant.

Unit 9: Planning vocabulary development

1. **How would you deal with the problem of differences in the number of words known by children in a Grade 1 or other primary school phase classroom.**

   There are various possible answers to this. You might want to find out what kind of gap exists between those who know few words and those who know many. Then you might give extra vocabulary instruction to those with a deficit. You might concentrate on the key high frequency words that they do not know. This would need to be done systematically over the school year.

2. **Explain the distinction between high frequency words and sight words.**

   High frequency words are the words that people use most often in speech or writing. Sight words is a term for a few high frequency English words that are difficult to decode phoneticaly because of their irregular spelling and should be learned by sight.

3. **How would you identify the high frequency words in the reading texts used in a Foundation Phase classroom (and also the sight words in English texts).**

   Obtain the published lists of grade appropriate high frequency words (from the internet, the CAPS publications, etc.) in the particular language and check how often these words appear in the reading texts.

4. **Where would be a good place to find examples of academic language words in use in a school?**

   Old examination papers and copies of tests.

Unit 10: Vocabulary resources

1. **Find a list of English sight words suitable for grade 1.**
2. **Find a list of high frequency words in your mother tongue.**
3. **Look at the range of learner readers in your home language on the Department of Basic Education website (https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/LearningandTeachingSupportMaterials(LTSM)/GradedReadersandBigBookHL.aspx).**
4. **Look at the range of readers in your home language on the African Storybook website (https://africanstorybook.org/).**
5. **Find a dictionary prescribed for home language learners in a primary school and have a look at its introductory pages on how to use the dictionary.**

All these questions rely on your own 'answers'.

Unit 11: Special issue – English vocabulary

1. **Explain the grammatical difference between the two articles in English giving examples.**

   The article "a" refers to any thing of that type, "a cat" could be any cat whereas "the" refers to a specific thing, so "the cat" is a specific individual cat.

2. **How can word bases or roots help readers decode unknown words and improve vocabulary?**

   They provide the basic meaning of the word before its meaning may be modified or extended by affixes or inflections.

3. **What is the meaning of the four most common English prefixes?**

   un- not
   re- again
   in- not
   dis- not, opposite of

4. **Briefly explain the origin of the complex spelling system in English.**

   English vocabulary draws on all the languages that have influenced the formation of modern English – British, Anglo-Saxon, Norse, Norman French, Latin, Greek and other languages. In many cases the spelling of words uses the spelling of those original languages though the words may no longer be pronounced that way in English and now the spelling seems irregular, though if one understands the form the spelling takes it may give valuable clues as to the meaning of the word or parts of the word.

PrimTEd Teaching Reading Study Guides

Study guide 6: Vocabulary

© 2021 Department of Higher Education and Training

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

This is a short and basic guide to the development of vocabulary knowledge and use in the primary school.

The study guide includes short self-tests for each unit in the study guide.

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Primary Teacher Education Project of the Department of Higher Education and Training and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PrimTEd Teaching Reading Study Guides

Study guide 6:

Vocabulary

Primary Teacher Education project
Department of Higher Education and Training

PrimTEd Teaching Reading Study Guides

Study guide 6: Vocabulary

© 2021 Department of Higher Education and Training

With acknowledgments to the Sesotho and IsiZulu Reading Project based at the University of Johannesburhg for providing the initial content for this Study Guide

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

You are free to share (that is, copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format) and adapt (remix, transform, and build upon the material) as long as you follow these licence terms:

Attribution (by)

You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

Non Commercial (nc)

You can copy, distribute, display, perform, adapt and use this material for any purpose other than commercially (unless you get permission first). Non Commercial means not primarily intended for or directed towards commercial advantage or monetary compensation.

Share Alike (sa)

You may remix, transform, or build upon the material, but you must distribute your contributions under the same licence as the original.

No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the licence permits.

Notices
You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation.

For the full text of this Creative Commons licence go to:

https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/legalcode

Department of Higher Education and Training
Private Bag X174, Pretoria, 0001
123 Francis Baard Street, Pretoria, 0001
Tel.: 012 312 5911 / 0800 87 2222 / 086 999 0123
Fax.: 012 323 5618
Web: www.dhet.gov.za

Contents

Vocabulary 1

What does the literacy teacher need to know about vocabulary building? 1

What this study guide contains 1

What literacy teacher standards are covered? 2

1. Oral and written vocabularies 5

Unit 1: Self test questions 6

2. The importance of reading in vocabulary development 7

Unit 2: Self test questions 8

3. Explicit instruction on vocabulary 9

Instruction in specific words found in the classroom texts 9

Teacher read alouds 10

Teaching function words 11

Special words and figures of speech 12

Denotation and Connotation 14

Language registers 14

Unit 3: Self test questions 14

4. Word learning strategies: morphemic analysis 15

Morphemic analysis: using information about meaningful word parts (morphology) to work out the meanings of words in a text 15

Common Greek and Latin word roots in English 16

Word roots and bases and word families 18

Word families 19

Compound words 20

A morphemic analysis strategy related to morphemes, roots and affixes 20

Unit 4: Self test questions 20

5. Word learning strategies: contextual analysis 21

Using contextual clues in the text 21

Guessing the meaning of a word with the help of general knowledge 22

Combining contextual and morphemic analysis 23

Unit 5: Self test questions 24

6. Word learning strategies: dictionary use 25

Teaching dictionary use 25

Finding the meaning of words on the internet 26

Thesauri and other resources 26

Unit 6: Self test questions 26

7. Academic language vocabularies **27**
Unit 7: Self test questions 28

8. Assessing vocabulary knowledge **29**
Assessment rubrics 31
Unit 8: Self test questions 32

9. Planning vocabulary development **33**
Word lists of high frequency words 35
English sight words in the early grades 35
Unit 9: Self test questions 36

10. Vocabulary resources **37**
Books 37
Word lists 37
Academic word lists 37
Dictionaries, glossaries and thesauri 37
Vocabulary development plans and programmes 37
Vocabulary development in curriculum guides 38
Unit 10: Self test questions 38

11. Special issue – English vocabulary **39**
Unit 11: Self test questions 40

References **41**

Self test answers **45**

Vocabulary

What does the literacy teacher need to know about vocabulary building?

This study guide provides a basic information on vocabulary building for teachers of reading and writing in all the phases of primary school. Teachers need to understand the reciprocal relationship between spoken language and written language and why and how both oral and written vocabularies have to be developed in primary schooling. They have to recognize the complex relationship between oral language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, and reading comprehension.

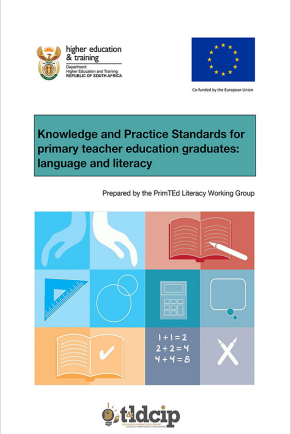
Vocabulary learning enhances all aspects of oral language and reading and writing proficiency. A broad vocabulary strengthens precise communication, particularly in writing. It also improves general knowledge. Learners who know more words are likely to be better at what they do and be more self-confident.

As children read, they come across new words that they may not have been exposed to in their oral language. In order for reading comprehension to occur, children must have word knowledge, or vocabulary, in addition to knowledge of the structure or grammar of the language and reasoning skills. The development of a growing vocabulary happens through oral language practice, by explicit instruction, and by reading itself.

What this study guide contains

There are eleven units:

1. Oral and written vocabularies
2. Importance of reading in vocabulary development
3. Explicit instruction on vocabulary
4. Word learning strategies: morphemic analysis
5. Word learning strategies: contextual analysis
6. Word learning strategies: dictionary use
7. Academic language vocabularies
8. Assessing vocabulary knowledge
9. Planning vocabulary development
10. Vocabulary resources
11. Special issue - English vocabulary



What literacy teacher standards are covered?

This study guide covers six of the standards (or portions of them). These knowledge standards relate to the knowledge of language and literacy that teaduate teachers need to have to teach learners to read and write.

5. Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of oral language in literacy development and of the influence of written language on oral language.

5.1 The reciprocal relationship between spoken language and written language can be explained.

5.2 The distinction between the language of everyday Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and that of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is described.

5.3 Ways of developing listening and speaking in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases are described.

5.4 The relationship between orality development and literacy development in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases is explained.

5.5 The importance of vocabulary development in home language and first additional language can be discussed.

5.6 The importance of reading aloud and its role in the encouragement of reading for pleasure can be articulated.

5.7 An understanding of varied oral genres and types of from different cultures is demonstrated, e.g. praise poems, riddles, nursery rhymes.

11. Demonstrates basic knowledge of phonics, e.g. knowing letter shapes, knowing that written words are built up from letters and letter groups with sound values

11.1 Phonics is defined.

11.2 The use of phonics and decoding strategies appropriate to the particular language and grade are identified.

11.3 Awareness of the similarities and differences in phonics strategies in analytic/ isolating and agglutinating languages is shown.

11.4 The importance of syllables and word morphology in the African languages is recognised.

11.5 Explanations of the principles underpinning particular phonics approaches are given.

11.6 Knowledge of resources available to support particular approaches/programmes is demonstrated.

12. Demonstrate vocabulary and word study knowledge, e.g. know how to help learners extend vocabulary for communication and academic purposes

12.1 The role of vocabulary in learning across and beyond the curriculum in expanding the learner's conceptual world is articulated.

12.2 A variety of research-based ways to introduce and build new language and vocabulary in both home and additional languages (e.g., word study, word parts and word associations, etc.) throughout the curriculum and across different subjects and grade levels is described, including:

- Word features and their structures, for example, syllables, prefixes, infixes, suffixes, roots, inflections, etc., are explained.
- A list of high frequency and sight words (words which should be instantly recognisable) for the grade level is presented.
- A appropriate vocabulary list with the words in the particular language that should be spoken and written by the end of a particular grade (and which take into account necessary subject specific vocabularies) can be presented.

12.3 The distinction between expressive and receptive vocabulary is explained.

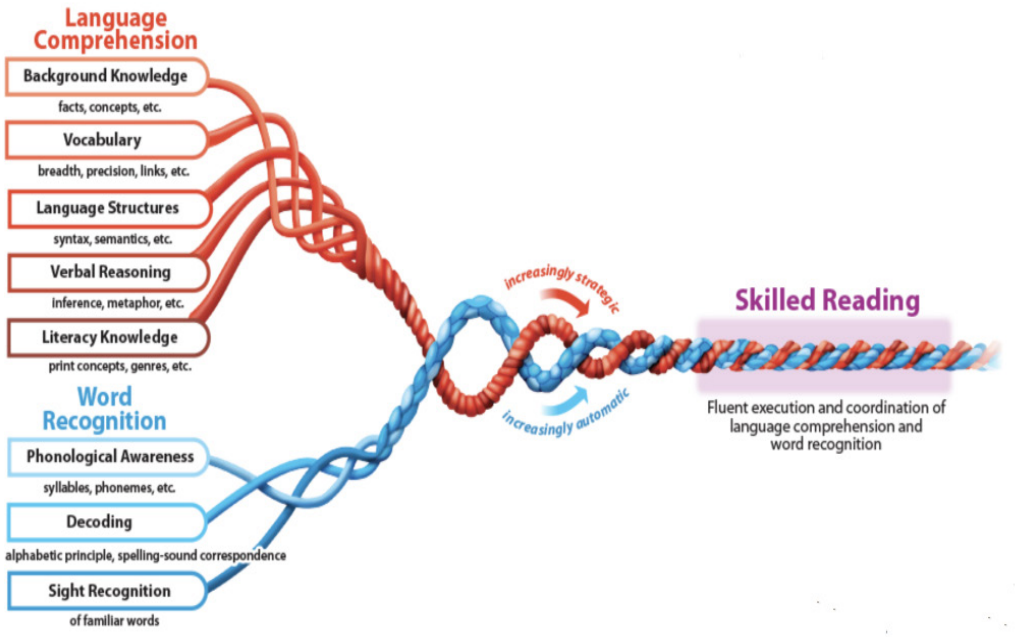
16. Demonstrates knowledge about typical sequences of development in children's spelling.

16.1 The role of knowledge of spelling strings and patterns and morphemes in spelling accurately in the particular language orthography is demonstrated.

16.2 Knowledge of the role of morphemes in spelling is demonstrated (e.g. in Nguni languages, um, aba, isi, izi, ile, etc. and in English, -ed, -ing, sub-, pre-, in-, etc.) is demonstrated.

16.3 Knowledge of spelling strings and patterns is demonstrated (knowing the patterned basis to spelling (there are a limited number of possible spellings for individual syllables) (e.g. in English ight (as in height, light, night), ei (as in their, weigh), etc).

16.4 Understanding the role of invented spelling and influence of the learners' linguistic repertoire on spelling development is demonstrated.



As can be seen from this digram based upon Scarborough (2001) skilled reading is dependent upon both **language comprehension** and **word recognition** and both of these require various components of vocabulary knowledge – background knowledge, vocabulary, metaphor, recognition of familiar words, and so on.

1. Oral and written vocabularies

There is a complex relationship between oral language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, and reading comprehension.

The number of words commonly used in nearly all oral speech (child or adult) is quite low – probably about 400 to 600 words. Most children's books have a richer **vocabulary** than most adult speech or the speech on the television programmes that children watch.

Another thing to note is that we usually recognize and understand many more words than we actually use (this is our passive vocabulary). Our active vocabulary is the words we actually use in speech (or writing). A similar distinction is made between our receptive vocabulary (all the words we know and can read and write) and expressive vocabulary (words we can say or write in a grammatically acceptable way).

It is important that teachers also understand that children enter school knowing varying numbers of words. Estimates are given of linguistically advantaged children entering into Grade 1 knowing two to four times more words than those the linguistically disadvantaged children know. The variance comes from growing up in different family and community environments. Children who come from poor communities typically have smaller vocabularies than children who come from wealthier homes. (Children whose parents give books to their pre-school children and read story books to them will have larger vocabularies.)

If learners hope to access post-secondary study they have to enormously enlarge their vocabularies – probably to at least 20 000 words. During their schooling they should be acquiring about 800 to 1 000 new **word root** meanings a year.

There are also words that are necessary to make critical distinctions in the physical and social worlds in which the learners live. Without these word knowledge tools, one will be severely disadvantaged in attaining one's goals in an advanced modern society.

Building a larger vocabulary is done partly by explicit instruction in school. But the number of new words learned in such a way is relatively small – about 400 a year. Most vocabulary development comes from reading. Learners have to know how to read fluently to continue to grow their vocabulary at the rate that is necessary. When they find new words in texts, they have to be able to find out their meaning through using dictionaries and other resources.

Vocabulary building requires different ways for the learner to deal with **word recognition**. The learner will know the meaning of some words, be able to explain the meaning of, and be able to use those words in speech and writing. Other words may be recognized and understood when reading but are not used in speech or writing. Then there are words which the learner has a very vague idea of their meaning, or recognizes the words but does not know what they mean, or has never heard or seen the words in print before.

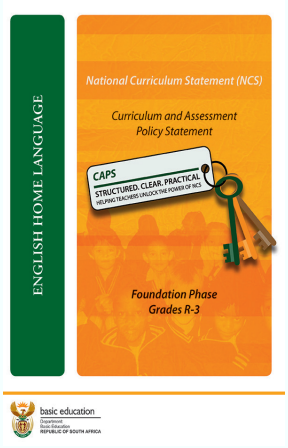
The teacher who wants to teach vocabulary effectively needs to have strategies to deal with these varying levels of word recognition or non-recognition.

vocabulary: the words known or used by a person or group or a set of words compiled from written or oral sources

word root: a morpheme that expresses the basic meaning of a word and cannot be further divided into smaller morphemes

morpheme: The smallest meaningful grammatical unit of a language, that cannot be further divided (e.g. in the word "incoming", in, come, and ing are morphemes). In the word "pins", pin and the suffix s are morphemes. "Pin" is a morpheme that is also a word.

word recognition: the ability to recognise a written word correctly and virtually effortlessly without consciously decoding the individual letters or guessing what the word means



The Department of Basic Education's ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*** (CAPS) puts great stress on oral language development during the Foundation Phase. Specific attention has to be given to listening and speaking skills and teaching time is allocated to listening and speaking activities. Vocabulary enrichment should form a key part of these activities.

Unit 1: Self test questions

1. In everyday speech we usually make use of only about _____to _____ words. [400 to 600 / 100 to 200 / 4000 to 6000]
2. Distinguish between our passive and active vocabularies.
3. Indicate whether these statements are true or false.

   All children when entering school know more or less the same number of words. _____

   Children who come from wealthy backgrounds typically have larger vocabularies. _____

   A person who wishes to study at university probably needs to know at least 10 000 words. _____
4. Define **morpheme** and **word root**.
5. Where does most learned vocabulary come from? _____

2. The importance of reading in vocabulary development

Once a reader decodes a word, vocabulary plays a predominant part in reading comprehension. Vocabulary is necessary for comprehension – unless one understands 95 percent of the words in a text one is unlikely to make sense of it.

Reading comprehension depends heavily on knowledge of the individual word meanings in a text, and these meanings are learned by repeated exposure to a word's use in context and by explicit, direct instruction in word meanings.

The only opportunities to acquire new words, to build vocabulary, occur when the child is exposed to these new words in oral language or in written texts.

How does the child learn new words that are outside his or her current vocabulary?

A consistent finding related to vocabulary learning is that children need multiple exposures to a new word in meaningful contexts to learn it well. These multiple exposures will happen much more often while reading than while talking or watching television.

Most vocabulary development takes place outside of explicit instruction. Indeed, the amount of time devoted to reading out of school is probably the most important indicator of who will prosper in later life: cognitively, socially and economically.

This reinforces again the vital importance of early fluency in reading. There is a clear reciprocal relationship between vocabulary and reading development.

It also needs to be recognized that words gained through reading can also enhance oral language proficiency. The more words a child knows the easier it is to read and comprehend. This leads to building more vocabulary knowledge.

These points are well summarised in a ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*** document (Department of Basic Education, 2013c, pp. 48-49):

> "Learners also need a wide vocabulary, which is perhaps the single most important factor enabling a person to communicate well. A wide vocabulary is essential for all the language skills, but especially for reading and writing. The most effective way for learners to improve their grammar and increase their vocabulary is by reading intensively inside and outside of the classroom."

In classrooms where the language of instruction is not the mother tongue of the learners there is the problem that they may not have sufficient vocabulary and grammar to make sense of what they read. The teacher has to rapidly build up their vocabulary and getting them to read more in the language of instruction is the best way of improving their vocabulary, providing that there are sufficient simple texts at the right level for independent breading (Department of Basic Education, 2011d, p. 16).

fluency: reading fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with meaningful expression. Fluency is the bridge between word recognition and comprehension (in which meaning is gained from what is read). Fluent readers can recognize a high percentage of words automatically.

Unit 2: Self test questions

1. What percentage of the words in a text does one need to know to make sense of it, to comprehend its meaning?

   _____

2. Is it true that children usually understand a new word after hearing its meaning explained only once?

   _____

3. What is reading fluency?

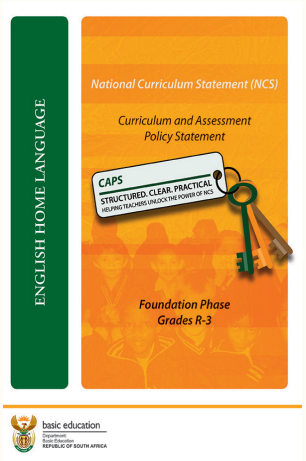
3. Explicit instruction on vocabulary

Teachers need to be able to teach vocabulary. Direct vocabulary instruction may be particularly important for learners with weak oral language skills who lack the proper foundation for easily acquiring new words.

Instruction in specific words found in the classroom texts

Children should be explicitly taught specific words selected from texts that they are reading (Beck and McKeon, 1985; Beck *et al.*, 2002; Biemiller, 2005, 2010).

This must be done regularly and intensively – in the Foundation and Interim Phases at a starting rate of about 2 words per school day in Grade 1 (and double that for learners with a small oral vocabulary). (The ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*** gives detailed instructions on vocabulary instruction for the various primary school phases for both home language and First Additional Language.)



Some basic words will already be known by children and do not need to be taught (though FAL learners may).

First taught should be generally useful words that occur frequently in oral language and in texts and are central for reading comprehension. They can usually be explained in everyday language, starting with partially known words and words that can be visualised – so called concrete words naming things that can be seen, felt, heard, tasted.

The initial focus should be on words that appear in clear contexts in the texts the children read in class or have read to them in class. Vocabulary in context is more easily understood.

The teacher can pre-teach new words that will appear in the text or during read alouds, and ask questions to help determine the meaning of a word as it is used in the context of the story.

After the text has been read the teacher should discuss the vocabulary in its context. Explanation should be given of each word's meaning and typical use. Examples can be given of the word's meanings in various contexts.

The children need to have multiple exposures to each new word. The teacher must ensure that the learners practice using the words in new contexts and situations and link them to other words commonly used in those contexts..

Instruction that engages learners in active analysis of word meanings is more effective in promoting learning than instruction that only has learners relate words to their own background knowledge and personal experiences.

The teaching of the specialised words of school subjects should be done as the need arises.

Vocabulary instruction is less effective if only taught by giving a list of words for children to learn each day instead of explaining their meanings in context, discussing their meanings, and checking the spelling thereof. (Though these lists are useful to the teacher for ensuring that a full set of appropriate vocabulary is covered in class instruction.)

Teacher read alouds

Before reading, the teacher introduces the target words (about ten words from one or two books per week in Grade 1 gradually increasing in the subsequent grades). Read and pronounce each word and write it on the board. Explain the word's meaning in everyday language. Provide a different context or different contexts for the word.

During the reading, very briefly explain each target word (as well as any words that may affect comprehension).

After the reading review the target words (not the comprehension words) –

- say the word, and write it on the board,
- give a plain language explanation of its meaning,
- give examples of the word in an appropriate context,
- provide a different context,
- identify appropriate use of the word in sentences,
- say the word again.

Help the learners engage actively with the words. There are many ways of doing this to check the understanding of the learners The teacher can ask the children to:

- develop question sentences with the target words
- use a number of target words together in a question sentence
- given a context, develop questions for all the words
- choose the best word for a sentence
- say whether a word use is correct
- say whether a sentence using the word is True or False
- give **antonyms** or **synonyms** for the words,
- give examples and non-examples of the words (e.g. a crow is an example of a bird, a bat is not)
- use the word to start or complete sentences,
- etc.

Learners need to be rewarded for expanding their vocabulary by using new words in their writing even if only partially correct.

antonym: a word with an opposite meaning to another word, e.g. *good* and *evil*

synonym: a word that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase in the same language, e.g. *close* is a synonym of *shut*.

Teaching function words

Function words are words that have little meaning in themselves but help hold together the other words in the sentence, expressing the grammatical relationships among them. Thus they form important elements in the structures of sentences. They help alert the reader to the structure of sentences.

Function words are crucial for comprehension and the teacher will often need to explain them when reading aloud.

The following are typical function words in English:

Function words in English	
Type	**Examples**
articles: indicate specific or non-specific nouns	the, a, an, some, any
conjunctions: connect words, phrases or clauses	and, but, or, for, nor, so, yet
correlative conjunctions: pairs of conjunctions that work together	either/or, neither/nor; not only/but also
subordinating conjunctions: joining a clause to a subordinate clause	after, although, as, as if, as soon as, as far as, as long as, as though, because, before, even if, even though, how, however, if, in order (that), in as much as, in that, in case (that), insofar as, lest, no matter how, now that, once, only, only if, provided (that), since, so that, supposing (that), than, that, then, though, thus, till, unless, until, well, when, whenever, where, wherever, whereas, whether, while, why
pronouns	I, you, he, she, it; me, you, him, her, it; my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its; we, you, they; us, you, them; our, ours, your, yours, their, theirs
prepositions: used to show a relationship in space or time or a logical relationship between two or more people, places or things	about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, at, because of, before, behind, below, beneath, beside(s), between, beyond, but, by, concerning, despite, down, during, except, excepting, for, from, in, in front of, in spite of, inside, instead of, into, like, near, of, off, on, onto, out, outside, over, past, regarding, since, through, throughout, to, toward(s), under, underneath, until, up, up to, upon, with respect to, with, with regard to, within, without
auxiliary verbs: show tense	is, am, are, do, did, will, would, can, could, shall, should, has, have, got, etc.

A full range of function words should be known by the end of the Senior Phase.

Special words and figures of speech

There are several categories of words that have to be given special vocabulary learning attention, partly because they regularly appear in the literature of a particular language or culture. Some of these are the following:

	Definition	Examples
synonym	Words that have the same or very similar meanings	happy/glad close/shut
antonym	Words with opposite meanings	good/evil hot/cold
paronym	Words pronounced or written in a similar way but which have different meanings	alternately/alternatively affect/effect conjuncture/conjecture bear/bare
polyseme	A word or phrase with several different meanings	bright (light)/bright (clever)
homonym	Words pronounced and/or spelled the same but which have a different meaning	bat (flying animal) bat (cricket bat)
homophone	Words pronounced the same but which have a different meaning	
homograph	Words spelled the same but which have different meaning	

polyseme: a word or phrase that has several meanings. In many languages many of the high-frequency words used in common speech have more than one meaning. Johnson *et al.* (1983) found that 70% of key Foundation Phase English words were polysemous.

figure of speech: a word or phrase intentionally used in a way different from common use to emphasize or embelish both spoken and written language.

Another set of words and phrases, called **figures of speech** and which include similes, metaphors and idioms, are very language and culture specific and therefore tend to confuse new learners of a language. Some are listed below.

Figures of speech		
	Definition	**Examples**
simile	A comparison of two things that point to some similarity by using a word such as "like" or "as"	He was like a lion.
metaphor	An identification of two separate things without using comparison words such as "like" and "as". It states directly that one thing is another thing	He was a lion. He is a rolling stone.
idiom	A phrase which means something different from the plain meaning of its words	Jonas kicked the bucket. [meaning Jonas died] I am under the weather. [meaning I am sick]

personification	Referring to animals, objects or abstract ideas as if they are human	She was nature's child. My alarm yelled at me this morning
hyperbole	Deliberate exaggeration to emphasise something	I waited for you for ages. This textbook weighs a ton.
irony	A subtle, often humorous or sarcastic, statement that appears to be a plain statement but which in the context means something very different or the opposite	During a thunderstorm saying "Isn't this weather pleasant." Calling a warlord a 'prince of peace'
sarcasm	A hurtful remark, often using irony, to express contempt or ridicule for somebody	Are you always this annoying or are you exerting extra effort today?
understatement	Statement suggesting that something is much smaller or less important than it really is	The Covid-19 lockdown was a minor irritation in 2020.
pun	A play on words, typically by using words that sound similar but have very different meanings	To the person who invented zero, thanks for nothing. Need an ark to save two of every animal? I noah guy.
onomatopoeia	Words which (seem to) imitate the sounds they refer to	moo hiss
oxymoron	A pair of words which contradict each other	bitter sweet deafening silence
metonomy	Using the name of one thing for another thing with which it is associated or an attribute of	Pretoria = government crown = king
synedoche	Using the name of a part to stand for the whole	suits = businessmen hands = workers
litotes	A phrase in which a positive statement is made by negating a negative statement	He was not a bad player = He was a good player
euphemism	A mild, indirect or vague word or phrase used instead of a more direct but unpleasant or offensive one	between jobs (unemployed) let go (fired) late (dead)

Many of these figures of speech require a lot of practice to be used effectively in writing, particularly if writing in a second language.

Idioms particularly tend to confuse those unfamiliar with them and learners of a new language must learn its idiomatic expressions as vocabulary. (Unfortunately, languages often have thousands of idiomatic expressions – English has about 25 thousand, though most are uncommon or linked to certain localities).

Denotation and Connotation

Denotation is the precise, literal meaning of a word – as a dictionary would define it. Connotations are additional meanings associated with the word that arise from an individual's experience and the culture of the day. A good example would be colour words. The denotation of "red" is simply a colour. But the connotations of "red" are many – danger, warning, blood, stop, vitality, a political tendency, etc.

As learners progress as readers and writers they have to become aware of the connotations of the words in the vocabulary they know and use in particular contexts.

Language registers

The different ways a speaker or writer uses language – vocabulary, tone of voice, grammar, etc. – in different social situations is called a register. You speak politely to a stranger or a superior, very formally in an interview or making a presentation, informally and casually when speaking to a friend. A close group of friends or people working together or a gang may use slang – speaking in an informal register using words that members of the group prefer over the common vocabulary of the standard language to help built a separate group identity and exclude outsiders.

Slang is not to be confused with jargon which is the specialized language of a professional or occupational group. While this language is often useful or necessary for those within the group, it is usually meaningless to outsiders.

Learners have to get used to the formal register – and the vocabulary that goes with it – in classroom interactions and in the various situations of life that demand it.

Unit 3: Self test questions

1. Direct vocabulary instruction is particularly important for people with _____ _____ _____ _____.
2. In Grade 1 the children should be taught at least <u>two / ten/ twenty</u> words each school day.
3. What words should be taught first?
4. In teaching a new word what should the teacher explain?
5. What are function words?
6. Distinguish between an antonym and a synonym and between a simile, a metaphor and an idiom.
7. Define a polyseme and give an example.
8. Give an example of a homophone.

4. Word learning strategies: morphemic analysis

In addition to specific word instruction, children should be taught word-learning strategies that they can use on their own (which they need because most vocabulary development will come from their own individual reading).

It is impossible to provide specific instruction for all the words that children do not know. So learners have to be able to determine the meaning of words that are new to them but are not taught directly. This becomes more and more important in the Intermediate, Senior and FET phases.

To do this, children have to develop effective word-learning strategies for the following four types of new word learning:

- Learning the meaning for a new word representing a known concept
- Clarifying and enriching the meaning of a known word
- Learning a new meaning for a known word
- Learning the meaning of a new word representing an unknown concept.

These word learning strategies rest on the foundation that children already know how to apply grade appropriate phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words and finding out their meaning.

Teachers need to know the following strategies and help children practise them:

- morphemic analysis
- contextual analysis
- dictionary use

Morphemic analysis: using information about meaningful word parts (morphology) to work out the meanings of words in a text

The **morphology** of words should be taught in the context of rich vocabulary instruction making use of meaningful contexts in the texts being read.

The important word parts should be explained systematically with time for reteaching and practice. Learners need to be taught about words parts and how to assemble and disassemble words, especially in content-area texts.

Explicit instruction on morphology should enable learners to determine a word's meaning based on its **root**, that is, the **morpheme** that expresses the basic meaning of the word, though that meaning may be altered in different ways by prefixes and/or infixes and/or suffixes attached to the root.

morphology: the study of the structure of words as combinations of smaller units of meaning within them (morphemes), how they are formed, and their relationship to other words in the same language. Such study analyses the structure of words and parts of words, such as stems, root words, prefixes, infixes and suffixes. Morphology also looks at such things as intonation and stress, and the ways context can change a word's pronunciation and meaning.

morpheme: the smallest meaningful grammatical unit of a language, that cannot be further divided (e.g. in the word "incoming", "in", "come", and "ing" are morphemes). In the word "pins", "pin" and the suffix "s" are morphemes.

Roots, prefixes, and suffixes are all single morphemes. In contrast, stems and bases can be composed of one or many morphemes.

word root: a morpheme that expresses the basic meaning of a word and cannot be further divided into smaller morphemes. Some roots can stand alone and some cannot. Many word roots are identical to word bases.

word stem: a word root or word or compound word before any prefixes or inflectional suffixes are attached. It carries the meaning of the word.

Types of morphemes	Examples
Unbound morphemes Can stand alone as words	Common root words: go, help, play, run, sun, tin
Bound morphemes Cannot stand alone as words	Prefixes: dis-, in-, re-, un- Derivational suffixes: -ful, -less, -ly Inflectional suffixes: -ed, -es, -ing, -s Greek roots: bio, graph, scope Latin roots: dict, ject, port, struct, tact

Common Greek and Latin word roots in English

English vocabulary words that contain Greek or Latin roots. All are bound morphemes that cannot stand alone. Greek roots are common in mathematics and science, Latin roots in more general academic vocabulary.

Greek word roots in English		
Greek Root	**Meaning**	**Examples**
aer	air, atmosphere	aeronautics, aerosol
arch	chief, leader	archbishop, hierarchy, matriarch, monarch, monarchy, patriarch, anarchy
arche/archaeo	primitive, ancient, origin	archaic, archaeology
astro	star	astronomy, astrology, astronaut, asteroid, asterisk
auto	self	autobiography, autonomy, autoimmune
biblio	books, of books	bibliography, bibliophile
bio	life	autobiography, biology
chron	time	chronology, chronicles
cosm/cosmo	universe, world	microcosm, cosmic
dem	people	demographics, democracy, demagogue
derma	skin	dermatologist, hypodermic
ethn/ethno	nation, people group	ethnicity, ethos
geo	earth	geography, geology
gen	family	genealogy, genetic, genus
gram	writing	grammar, grammatical
graph	write, record	autograph, graphic
hemo	blood	hemophiliac, hemorrhage
hiero	sacred, holy	hieroglyphics, hierarchy
hydr/hydra/hydro	water	hydrate, hydraulic, dehydrate
ideo	idea	ideology, ideologue
log	word, speech	logic, dialogue
meter/metr	measure	diameter, thermometer
micro	small	microscope, microcosm

ology	study of	biology, methodology
ono/onym	name	anonymous, onomatopoeia, pseudonym
phil	friendly love	philanthropic, philanthropy
phob	fear	phobia, arachnophobia
phon	sound	phonetic, telephone, phonograph
photo/phos	light	photograph, phosphorous, phosphorescent
pneu	air, breath	pneumonia, pneumatic
polis	city state	metropolis, cosmopolitan
psyche	soul, animating spirit	psychology, psychic
pyr	fire	pyromaniac
techno	art, skill	technique, architect
tele	from afar	telephone
the/theo	god	theology, apotheosize

Latin word roots in English		
Latin Root	**Meaning**	**Examples**
acer/acid/acri	bitter, sour	acerbic, acidic
agri	field, country	agriculture, agribusiness
alb	white	albino, alabaster
amic	friendly	amicable, inimical
aud	hear, sound	audible, audiology
bon	good	bonanza, bonus
ced/cess	go, yield	recession, recede, recess
femin	woman	feminine, feminism
flect/flex	bend	reflect, flexible
foli	leaf	foliage, defoliant
fract	to break	fracture, fractal
lat	broad, wide	latitude, lateral
lingu	language	bilingual, linguistics
longus	long	longevity, longitude
magn	great, large	magnificent, magnitude
mar	sea	maritime, marine
mir	amazement, wonder	miracle, mirage
mit/miss	send, cast	remit, dismiss
mut	to change	mutate, mutation
naut	sailor	nautical, nautilus
nomin	to name	name, nominate, nominal
not	note, paper	notable, noted, notary
nov	new	novice, novel, novelty
port	to carry, to bear	portal, transport

word root: a morpheme that expresses the basic meaning of a word and cannot be further divided into smaller morphemes. Some roots can stand alone and some cannot. Many word roots are identical to word bases.

word base: a morpheme or set of morphemes, which is itself a meaningful stand alone word, and from which other words can be created by the addition of affixes of any kind.

word stem: a word root, word or compound word before prefixes or inflectional suffixes are attached. It carries the word meaning.

word family: a group of words with related meanings that share a common word base and that differ in form due to the application of different morphological operations to alter the meaning of the base.

derivation: the process of creating a new word out of an old word, usually by adding a prefix or a suffix. A derivation may change the word category or part of speech.

inflection: a change (an inflection) in the form of a word (typically the ending) to express a grammatical function or attribute such as tense, mood, person, number, case, or gender. Inflections don't change the word category or part of speech.

etymology: the study of the historical origin and development of words

pel/puls	drive, push	dispel, repulse
port	carry	transport, portable
rupt	to break	rupture, interrupt
sed	sit	reside, sediment
sol	comfort, soothe	solace, consolation
spect	see	spectator, inspect, prospector
struct	build, form	construct, destruction
tact	to touch	contact, tactile
trans	across, on the other side of	transfer, transcend, transgress, transit

Latin and Greek roots for numbers in English

Numeral	Latin	Greek	Examples
1	uni-	mono-	uniform, unicycle, monotonous, monocotyledon
2	bi-, duo-	di-	bilingual, duet, dichotomy
3	tri-	tri-	triangle, trimester, triple, triathlon
4	quad-	tetra-	quadruple, quadrangle, quartet, tetrahedron
5	quint-	penta-	quintuplet, quintile, pentagon, pentangle, pentathlon
6	sex-	hex-	sextuplet, hexagogon
7	sept-	hept-	septet, heptagon
8	octa-	octo-	octagonal, octopus
9	non-, nove-	ennea-	nonagon, novena, ennead
10	deci-	dec-, deca-	decimal, decade, decathlon
100	cent-	hect-	centennial, hectogram, hectare
1 000	milli-	kilo-	millipede, kilogram, kilobyte
10 000		myria-	myriad
1 000 000		mega-	megabyte, megawatt
1 000 000 000		giga-	gigabyte, gigahertz

Word roots and bases and word families

A **word root** is the simplest form of the word. It can be the **word base** for a variety of words derived from it. These words form the **word family.** The **derived** words are usually formed from the base form of a word plus its **inflected** forms or derived forms using **prefixes** and **suffixes**. There are also other words that have a common **etymological** origin to the base. The word base and the derivatives all have a similar core meaning.

Knowing the meaning of one root word can help the learner understand the meaning of words in the word family that are related to that root word.

Word families

A word family is a group of words closely related in meaning and sharing the same word root, for example: "**run**"

> "**run**" **with suffix:** runs, running, runnings, runner, runners, runway, runways, runnaway, runaways, runny, runnel, runnels, runoff, runoffs, runabout, runabouts, runup, rundowns, runtime, runnable
>
> "**run**" **with prefix:** overrun, outrun, forerun, forerunner, rerun, underrun, underruns, roadrunner
>
> "**run**" **with prefix and suffix:** overruns, overrunning, outruns, outrunning, forerunners, reruns, rerunning, roadrunners, frontrunner, frontrunners.

The words in the word family are created by **affixes** being attached to the root word. When teaching root words, affixes which work with them should also be taught.

Note on "word families": This term is sometimes applied to any grouping of words that have the same vowel sound and contain the same short sequence of letters, often at the end, for example, in English, *ake* is part of words like "awake", "bake", "cake", "fake", "make", "rake", "snake", "take"

Suffixes in English

English suffixes are divided into two categories: inflectional and derivative.

Inflectional suffixes minimally change the meaning of the base word. and do not change the word category (part of speech).

Examples of inflectional suffixes are -ing, -ed, and -s or -es, and the possessive -s, comparative -er and superlative -est.

The meaning difference between "walk" and "walked" is small. "Walk" and "walked" are similar enough that learners can easily understand the difference.

Derivational affixes include -able, -er, -ish, -less, -ly, -ness, -th, -y, non-, un-, -al, -ation, -ess, -ful, -ism, -ist, -ity, -ize/-ise, -ment, in-

Derivational suffixes do change the meaning of the base or word root and its word category (part of speech)..

Examples of derivational suffixes are -tion, -ous, -ite, and -or.

The meaning difference between "govern" and "governor" is significant. The part of speech changes from a verb ("to govern") to a noun ("one who governs").

Learning suffixes can be difficult. This is because some suffixes have more abstract meanings than prefixes.

affix: is a morpheme that is added to the base word (or stem or root of a word) and modifies or extends its meaning or function. A prefix appears at the front of a word, an infix inside the word and a suffix at the end of a word.

prefix: prefixes are word parts that attach to the beginning of a word or word base to produce a related word or an inflectional form of a word, for example the *in-* in "informal".

infix: infixes are inserted into a word or word base. They are rare in English but common in African languages.

suffix: a suffix is a mopheme added to the ending of a word to change its meaning or grammatical function, for example *-ing* in "ending".

Prefixes in English

There are relatively few prefixes in English – about 20 account for most prefixed words in school level English texts and four of them account for about 60% of the use of prefixes:

un- = not or reversal or cancellation of an action or state

re- = again

in- = not, without or in, into, towards, inside

dis- = not or opposite

Compound words

Compound words have at least two unbound morphemes.

In some compound words the two morphemes retain their original meaning, e.g. bluebird, doghouse, housemaid, shotgun, airman

In others a new meaning is produced, e.g. airline, butterfly.

A morphemic analysis strategy related to morphemes, roots, and affixes

Honig *et al* (2018, p. 491) give an example of a morphemic analysis:

Using word-part clues to derive word meaning		
Step	**Action**	**Example word: "disagreement"**
1	Look for the Word Root. What does it mean?	agree = to have the same opinion
2	Look for a Prefix. What does it mean?	dis = not or opposite
3	Look for a Suffix. What does it mean?	ment = state or quality of something
4	Put the meanings of the word parts together. What is the meaning of the whole word?	dis + agree + ment = state or quality of not having the same opinion

Unit 4: Self test questions

1. Briefly describe morphemic analysis as an aid in understanding the meaning of words.
2. Name two classical languages which provide the word roots in many English words.
3. What is a word family?
4. Give at least six examples of words in the word family based on the English word base "work".
5. Find the meaning of these prefixes in English and give an example of each in a word: bi-, inter-, mis-, mono-, non-, pre-, post-, semi-, super-.

5. Word learning strategies: contextual analysis

Contextual analysis can either look for clues as to the meaning of words in the text or look for clues outside the text (making use of general and more specialised background knowledge).

Using contextual clues in the text

The reader can use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding.

[Note that in the early stages of learning to read, the using of contextual clues and illustrations and then guessing as a substitute for the phonetic decoding of words that are in their spoken vocabulary is not to be encouraged.]

When a learner comes across an unfamiliar word, a new word in their vocabulary, clues can be looked for in the surrounding text to help **infer** the meaning of the word. There may be words or phrases in the text that provide **clues** as to the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Punctuation – commas, quatation marks, etc. – can sometimes also provide **cues**.

Often in textbooks and children's literature the writer has deliberately provided helpful context clues (Honig *et al*, 2018, p. 499):

Type	Description	Example sentence
Definition	The author provides a direct definition of an unfamiliar word, right in the sentence.	A **hawser** is a rope or cable used in mooring or towing a ship.
	Signal words: is, are, means, refers to	
Appositive definition	This type of definition is a word or phrase that defines or explains an unfamiliar word that comes before it.	At night you can see **constellations**, or groups of stars, in the sky.
	Signal word: or	
	Signal punctuation: set off by commas	
Synonym	The author uses another word or phrase that is similar in meaning, or can be compared, to an unfamiliar word.	My friend's dog travels everywhere with him and my **canine** does the same.
	Signal words: also, as, identical, like, likewise, resembling, same, similarly, too	I thought the television show was funny and my father also thought it was **hilarious**.

context: the text or speech that comes immediately before and after a particular phrase or piece of text and may help understanding of its meaning.

More broadly, context is the background, environment, setting, situation, circumstances, framework, or surroundings of events, occurrences or statements. So context is everything that exists in the surroundings or situation of something and influences it.

inference: making a guess or forming an opinion based on the information that you have available

clue: something that provides information needed to solve a problem or mystery or to point the way to a destination

cue: a signal giving meaningful information about when something should occur such as the start or end of some action

Antonym	The author uses another word or phrase that means the opposite of, or is in contrast with, the unfamiliar word.	I hoped the story would make me **happy** but instead it made me **miserable**.
	Signal words: but, however, in contrast, instead of, on the other hand, though, unlike	
Examples	The author provides several words or ideas that are examples of an unfamiliar word.	In science we are studying **cetaceans,** marine mammals such as whales, dolphins and porpoises
	Signal words: for example, for instance, including, like, such as	
General	The author gives several clues to the meaning of an unfamiliar word, often spread over several sentences.	He was a great **athlete.** He won his first prize for running, his second for the long jump, and his third for the high jump.

Guessing the meaning of a word with the help of general knowledge

Sometimes relying on contextual clues within the text simply does not work. There are no definitions, synonyms, antonyms or examples. However, there is usually some contextual information that indicates what the text as a whole is about. This is where general knowledge comes in and is so important. For example, if the text is about some sporting event, the reader may have some general knowledge about sport in general or on the particular sport. Words in a text about sport could be about the rules of the game, the kind of field or court it is played on, the clothes worn, the typical activities – kicking, running, batting, tackling, scoring, and so on. From the store of words, the **lexicon**, that the reader has in his or her general knowledge base, guesses can be made about what the unfamiliar word is likely to represent.

lexicon: a lexicon, word-hoard, word-book, or word-stock is the vocabulary of a person, language, or branch of knowledge. In practical terms it is a list of all words known about a particular subject or area of knowledge.

Reading with understanding is highly dependent on our using these general background knowledge clues from outside the text (in addition to the specialised academic content that has to be learned during the years of school). Teachers should provide regular opportunities for learners to gain new information about the world – and the new words that go with this knowledge – and connect it to their prior knowledge so that it is meaningful.

This general knowledge also has a cultural component. A child needs to have a 'cultural literacy' that includes the words and ideas that characterise a particular society and are reflected in its literature, customs and art and other media (Hirsch, 1987, 2004, Hirsch *et al.*, 2002).

Much general knowledge learning is incidental. Incidental learning is the learning we pick up even when we are not specifically trying to learn, as is the case with most learning before children attend school.

All teachers should have a commitment to building up the general knowledge of children, particularly in the earlest years of school. In those Foundation years, when young children are still learning relatively little from their independent reading, they have to learn from listening to the teacher reading to them and from other classroom interactions.

It is often helpful to engage in group guessing about the meaning of a word they do not know because it can make use of often very different kinds of background knowledge possessed by the individual children in the class. This should only take place after the word has been decoded phonetically and said aloud (and the teacher can correct the pronunciation) and morphically analysed.

Reading comprehension relies on good background knowledge. Good teaching in the subjects children have to study will increase their vocabulary knowledge and therefore their reading proficiency.

Combining contextual and morphemic analysis

Honig *et al* (2018, pp. 555-559) give an example of a combined strategy that brings together contextual and morphemic analysis in understanding the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

1	Look for context clues in the words, phrases and sentences surrounding the unfamiliar word.
2	Look for word-part clues within the unfamiliar word.
	• Try to break the word up into its mophemes.
	• Look at the word root. What is its meaning?
	• Look at the prefix. What does it mean?
	• Look at the suffix. What does it mean?
	• Put these separate part meanings together. What is the meaning of the whole word?
3	Guess the meaning of the word based on steps 1 and 2.
4	Try out this guessed meaning in the original sentence. Does it make sense in this context?
5	Use a dictionary.

Unit 5: Self test questions

1. What is a context?
2. Describe how a reader can use contextual clues to get the meaning of words.

6. Word learning strategies: dictionary use

Learners need to be able to check the meaning of words that are new to them or which may have multiple meanings, some of which are unknown to them. They have to become familiar with using dictionaries and other reference works to assist in this enrichment of vocabulary and to regularise their spelling of them.

Further vocabulary development comes from independent reading and for this children have to learn how to use the appropriate dictionary procedures on their own.

To look up words, one first has to know the order of letters in the alphabet. As this order has no meaning in itself it simply has to be learned by **rote** and children should be tested that they know all the letters and their order.

rote learning: the memorisation of material that does not in itself have much meaning. Good examples are alphabetical order, multiplication tables, and telephone numbers. The memorization is mainly done done by repetition.

Teaching dictionary use

There are a number of dictionaries specially designed for primary school use. In the case of English dictionaries, particularly where the learners are not mother-tongue English speakers it is best to use a dictionary that has a limited defining vocabulary (that is, the words used to define and explain the meaning of other words come from a list of the most commonly used English words).

The basic skills

These are:

- Use alphabetical order to find the words starting with the first letter of the word.
- Use alphabetical order within the word to locate the word (working from second to third letter and so on).
- Use the guide words (at the top of the left hand and right hand pages) that indicate the first word on the left hand page and the last word on the right hand page) to help you locate the correct word.
- Check to see if there are several entries for that word.
- With each entry read all the entries for the word.
- Select the meaning that makes most sense, given the contextual clues in the text where the word appears.

Depending on the particular dictionary, there may be abbreviations saying which part of speech the word is (noun, verb, etc.) and the separation of the word into syllables to aid pronunciation. Most dictionaries have guidelines on how to use them in the front pages.

Differences in how English and African languages alphabetise

Because of the differences in language structure between English and the African languages, words in the dictionaries may be alphabetised in different ways.

In English, words stand alone and the first letter of the word is used to place it in alphabetical order. So in an English dictionary you know that the word "father" will be listed with words starting with an "f". In the African languages where nouns have class prefixes, the word may be filed as a word stem or as a full word. Thus in isiZulu the word for father may be listed as "-baba" or as "ubaba". It is likely that African language dictionaries for young learners will increasingly move towards the whole word position (de Schryver, 2010). Whatever the case, the learners need to be shown how the words are alphabetically ordered in the dictionary they use.

Finding the meaning of words on the internet

Leaners seeking definitions of words can, of course, easily find them on the internet, using a search engine such as DuckDuckGo, Google or Bing on a cellphone or computer. Although in a sense easier to do than paging through a dictionary, it comes with hazards – multiple dictionary sources with different United Kingdom and North American spellings. (In South African usage English spelling usually conforms to United Kingdom norms.) Effective internet use requires some search engine usage skills.

Thesauri and other resources

In the Senior Phase and in preparation for high school the learners should at least be informed on what a thesaurus is and how it can be used as a resource for selecting effective and precise vocabulary and finding alternatives to overused words in writing. There are several online thesauri.

Unit 6: Self test questions

1. Identify the following on this example entry from the top of a page in an English dictionary:

   guide word / part of speech / pronunciation guide / different meanings of the word /etymology of the word

gasket | -gate

gasket /ˈgaskɪt/ > **n**. **1** a sheet or ring of rubber or other material sealing the junction between two surfaces in an engine or other device. **2** archaic a cord securing a furled sail to the yard of a sailing ship.
— ORIGIN C17: perh. from Fr. garcette 'thin rope' (orig. 'little girl').

7. Academic language vocabularies

Learning to use the formal speech of school is a necessary part of the educational development of children. This academic language differs from their normal everyday language use. It is the language used in classroom lessons, textbooks, tests, and assignments. Understanding this academic language is sometimes called "Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency" (CALP) as distinct from the language of the everyday "Basic Interpersonal Communication" (BICS). This becomes particularly important in the Intermediate and Senior Phases where new 'academic language' words are introduced that children may not at first understand. In high school and in higher education the use of academic language becomes even more important.

So the teaching of a set of "school" or "academic" words is important.

These academic words mainly appear in written texts and are increasingly necessary for the literacy practices engaged in school study as children advance through the grades. They include general school/academic words that occur frequently in most subjects, subject specific terms, and the literary vocabulary that appears in literature but not much in everyday life.

Some of the norms of this academic language may be very different to the home language and cultural norms of the learners. Few children arrive at school fully competent in the language required for academic text interpretation. It is important that the teacher be consciously aware of these academic language norms so that they can help children understand what is expected of them, especially as many of these academic words are used in assessment questions – words like "describe", "analyse", "list", "define", "evaluate", "illustrate" – and they specify very precisely what tasks the child has to perform to answer the questions.

As children progress through the grades they will need to acquire the vocabulary, grammar and punctuation and strategies for the more complex and precise language required in speaking and in writing extended, reasoned texts in schools.

Teachers have to use a variety of methods and strategies to teach students the vocabularies and usage norms of academic language in the content areas and to help them incorporate these norms in their classroom usage of language. This is especially true for English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners.

Learning of academic vocabulary can be done through direct teaching and appropriate listening, reading and writing exercises. Often the academic vocabulary can be introduced in explaining what children have to do in exercises, presentations, tests and assignments.

An important part of acquiring a vocabulary suitable for academic work is learning how to break up (or **parse**) new words into their constituent parts and morphemes, rather than simply treating complex words as long words.

parse: to describe a word by stating its part of speech, form and relationship to the syntax of the sentence it is in. To parse a sentence is to break the sentence into its component parts of speech such as subject, verb, object, with an explanation of the form, function, and syntactical relationship of each part.

There are a number of useful academic word lists available, though most of them are at a tertiary level, such as that of Coxhead (1998) available at:

https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist

and also at:

https://simple.wiktionary.org/wiki/Wiktionary:Academic_word_list

One list suitable for the higher primary grades is:

https://primarycolour.home.blog/2019/06/14/tier-two-vocabulary-for-primary-teachers-the-3-4-5-list/

Unit 7: Self test questions

1. What do the abbreviations CALP and BICS stand for?
2. Why is it important for children to understand the academic language words used in assessment questions?
3. Explain what it is to parse a word or a sentence.
4. This is the first set of the most high frequency academic words in English in Coxhead's ***Academic Word List***. Which of these words do you think it reasonable to expect primary school children to know by the end of the Senior Phase (if their main language of instruction is English)?

   sector • available • financial • process • individual • specific • principle • estimate • variables • method • data • research • contract • environment • export • source • assessment • policy • identified • create • derived • factors • procedure • definition • assume • theory • benefit • evidence • established • authority • major • issues • labour • occur • economic • involved • percent • interpretation • consistent • income • structure • legal • concept • formula • section • required • constitutional • analysis • distribution • function • area • approach • role • legislation • indicate • response • period • context • significant • similar

8. Assessing vocabulary knowledge

The teacher should know what vocabulary learners need to know to be able to read and write effectively within and across the relevant grades and subjects. The teacher also needs to know how to assess the learners' progress in doing so. Without this assessment the teacher will not know how much vocabulary learning has actually taken place.

Vocabulary assessment (including word roots, prefixes, suffixes, word derivations, etc. as appropriate for the particular language) is to be done on a regular basis and take into account the CAPS recommendations.

In deciding what methods to use for assesment the teacher has to know what they are assessing and why. Vocabulary assessment is a broad field as shown in this table which outlines what 'knowing' words implies.

What knowing a word involves – form, meaning and use

Aspect	Component	Receptive knowledge	Productive knowledge
Form	Spoken	What does the word sound like?	How is the word pronounced?
	Written	What does the word look like?	How is the word written and spelled?
	Word parts	What parts are recognizable in this word?	What word parts are needed to express the meaning?
Meaning	Form and meaning	What meaning does this word form signal?	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	Concepts and Referents	What is included in this concept?	What items can the concept refer to?
	Associations	What other words does this word make people think of?	What other words could people use instead of this one?
Use	Grammatical functions	In what patterns does this word occur?	In what patterns must people use this word?
	Collocations	What words or types of words occur with this one?	What words or types of words must people use with this one?
	Constraints on use (register, frequency ...)	Where, when, and how often would people expect to find this word?	Where, when, and how often can people use this word?

Source: Adapted from Nation (2001, p. 27)

Vocabulary assessment can take many forms. Will it be done formally or informally? Will the vocabulary be isolated words in a list or embedded within the context of a text? Will only the passive vocabulary be tested or also how the learner makes use of the vocabulary they know in speech or writing?

referent: the person, thing, event or idea that a word, phrase, or symbol refers to

collocation: common word combinations, that is, a series of words or terms that co-occur more often than would be expected by chance, e.g., "bright idea", "strong drink".

cloze test: a test consisting of a portion of text with certain words or phrases removed, which the learner has to fill in. Cloze tests require the ability to understand context and vocabulary in order to identify the correct word or phrase that belongs in the omitted parts.

There are a huge range of methods to assess vocabulary knowledge and practice including multiple choice questions, (MCQ) cloze (fill in the missing word) tests, sentence and paragraph writing, etc. (Reed, 2010).

Assessments can include:

- Checking how many words the children know (oral questioning and word collecting)
- Choosing the correct word (MCQ, cloze)
- Choosing between similar words (MCQ)
- Defining words (MCQ, sentences, paragraphs)
- Translating a word into the home language
- Choosing a word to match a definition
- Choosing a definition to match a word
- Demonstrating decontextualized knowledge of a word's meaning, its relationship to other words, and extensions to metaphorical uses
- Forming new words with affixes
- Explaining the parts that make up the word (affixes, word root, inflections)
- Making a word map (a graphic representation of a word with its various forms, synonyms, antonyms, examples, non-examples, etc.)
- Applying the appropriate word in context
- Identifing examples and non-examples of a word or its use (e.g. a crow is an example of a bird, a bat is not)
- Saying if a word is used correctly in a sentence
- Demonstrating knowledge of multiple meanings of a word
- Identify a synonym or antonym for a word (in isolation or in a sentence context)
- Choosing an appropriate word or phrases to use in particular social situations, for example, apologizing or being introduced to somebody
- Listing all the words relating to a topic or category of things - requires situating the word within a system of ideas
- Choosing all the words related to a topic or category of things out of a larger list of words
- Discussing the vocabulary in a reading comprehension
- Keeping a word journal
- Checking whether the learners are applying new words in discussion, writing and in tests

Assessment rubrics

Various marking rubrics can be used to guide the assessment. There are many examples of such rubrics available on the internet. Here are some examples showing the typical sort of format of such guides to asessment:

Spelling and defining words and putting them in a sentence	
Good	Appears to have full understanding of the vocabulary words and writes each vocabulary word correctly and writes a full sentence using it correctly. An example and a definition of the vocabulary word are provided that correctly explain the meaning of the word.
Fair	Appears to have partial understanding of the vocabulary words and though writes each vocabulary word correctly writes an incomplete sentence. An example and definition may be incomplete.
Partial	Appears to have a very partial understanding of the vocabulary words and though writes each vocabulary correctly cannot write a sentence using it, nor give an example or a definition.
Inadequate	Attempts to write the correct words but they are misspelled. The learner cannot write a full sentence, using a word, give an example of its use, or define the word.
Fails	The learner does not attempt the assignment at all.

Use a set of pre-selected vocabulary words in a paragraph	
Excellent	Uses all words appropriately in a paragraph written with a grade appropriate vocabulary.
Good	Uses most words appropriately in a paragraph written with mostly grade appropriate vocabulary.
Fair	About half the words used appropriately in a paragraph written with a one grade lower vocabulary.
Poor	Less than a third of the words used appropriately in a paragraph written with a two or lower grade level vocabulary.
Fails	The learner does not attempt the assignment at all.

General Primary level vocabulary assessment				
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Match words to their definitions	Few	Some	Most	All
Complete sentences with vocabulary words that are grade appropriate, correct, and use new words and expressions whether general or subject specific	Few	Some vocabulary words	Most vocabulary words	All
Write definitions	Few	Some	Most	All
Write original sentences using the words	Few	Some	Most	All
Spelling, capitalization and punctuation	Often incorrect	Sometimes incorrect	Mainly correct	All correct

Assessment activities must be built upon a sound base of the reading of texts and of the learners' interacting with others in the use of new vocabulary. Unless learners have frequent encounters with each new word they cannot build up their vocabulary knowledge to nay depth.

Assessment of vocabulary must be based upon reasonable expectations given the amount of time given to the reading of texts and discussion about those texts to develop comprehension and vocabulary.

The testing of vocabulary must include the knowledge and use of word roots, prefixes, suffixes, word derivations, etc. as appropriate for the particular language.

Every day the teacher should do something playful with words. The way the classroom is organised and decorated should show that vocabulary learning is alive – with word charts and posters, both teacher and learner generated, placed where learners can see them as they write. In early grade classrooms objects should be labelled. There should be word games and puzzles available for use.

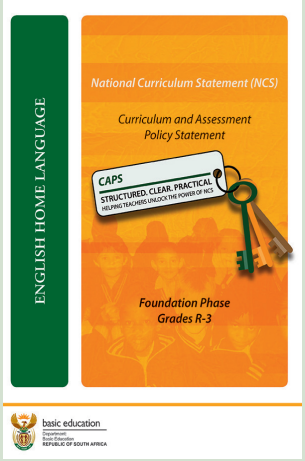
Unit 8: Self test questions

1. On page 30 there is a list of 22 assessment techniques. How familiar are you with these techniques? Consider whether you would be able to implement them.
2. What word parts are recognisable in the English word "unfortunately"? Use an English dictionary if necessary.

9. Planning vocabulary development

An organised teacher has to plan for vocabulary development across the school year and groups of teachers have to plan for development across the primary school phases in both home language and first additional language. This planning will have to take into account the reading texts and workbooks that are available in the school or obtainable elsewhere.

Teachers in the Intermediate and Senior Phase must never assume that teaching vocabulary is something only done in the Foundation Phase. This is made clear in the ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*** for Home languages which sets clear targets for vocabulary learning in the Intermediate Phase (Department of Basic Education, 2011b, p. 33):



	Term	1	2	3	4
Common spoken words	Grade 4	1700-2500	1850-3000	2000-3500	3500-4000
	Grade 5	2400-4000	2700-4250	3000-4500	4500-5000
	Grade 6	3500-5000	3700-5250	4000-5500	5500-6000
Reading vocabulary (new words)	Grade 4	800-1900	900-2200	1000-2500	2500-3000
	Grade 5	1500-3000	1750-3300	2000-3500	3500-4000
	Grade 6	2200-3800	2400-4200	2700-4600	3000-5000

Although it is right to target the learning of an appropriate number of new words in each grade, it must be emphasized that mastery of vocabulary is a gradual, context dependent, lifetime process of growth. Word learning happens bit by bit and each repeated encounter with a word adds to the depth of understanding its meaning. It takes time for learners to move from having no understanding of a word to having some passive hold over it to finally being able to situate it in various contexts and use it accurately in spoken and written communication.

To develop vocabulary the teacher has to do five essential things (Texas Education Agency, 2002):

- encourage wide reading
- expose students to high-quality oral language (through reading aloud and discussion)
- promote an interest and curiosity about words – developing 'word consciousness'
- provide explicit instruction of specific words
- teach and model independent word-learning strategies.

All these activities need to be done in a sensible sequence over the school grades as outlined in the various CAPS language documents and as exemplified in the following example for Grades R to 3.

Sequencing vocabulary steps
Reception year
Concept naming and use
Names pictures of common concepts
Uses words to describe location, size, colour and shape
Uses names and labels of basic concepts
Categorization
Identifies and sorts pictures of common words into basic categories
Vocabulary development and use
Learns new vocabulary through stories and instruction
Listens to new vocabulary in multiple contexts to understand its use
Uses newly learned vocabulary on multiple occasions
First Grade
Concept categorization
Sorts grade appropriate words with or without pictures into categories
Vocabulary development and use
Learns and uses unfamiliar words introduced in stories and informational passages
Increases knowledge of word meanings and uses new vocabulary
Second Grade
Concept categorization
Classifies and categorizes words into sets and groups
Vocabulary development and use
Learns and uses unfamiliar words that are introduced in stories and texts
Understands and explains common antonyms and synonyms
Increases knowledge of vocabulary through independent reading
Uses new vocabulary
Examines word usage and effectiveness to expand descriptive vocabulary
Makes inferences about the meaning of a word based on its use in a sentence
Uses word structure to learn meaning
ldentifies simple multiple-meaning words
Third Grade
Concept categorization
Classifies and categorizes increasingly complex words into sets and groups
Categorizes words in a conceptual hierarchy
Draws and uses semantic maps and organizers to convey word relations
Vocabulary development and use
Learns and uses unfamiliar words that are introduced in stories and passages
Increases knowledge of vocabulary through independent reading
Uses new vocabulary
Uses more descriptive vocabulary
Determines the meaning of a word based on its use in a sentence
Uses dictionary to determine word meaning
Uses knowledge of prefixes and sufixes to help determine word meaning

Source: University of Oregon, n.d.

Ideally, primary school teachers need to get together and agree on the essential vocabulary to be taught in each grade, including common words, general academic vocabulary used frequently across subjects, subject specific vocabulary and literary vocabulary that is not often used in everyday speech but is in the literature the learners will study.

In planning what words to teach explicitly, the teacher can make use of the words in the readers or other texts the children use and can also use lists of the most common high-frequency words used in texts in the particular language.

Word lists of high frequency words

High frequency word lists related to school grades are usually based on the words used in contemporary reading texts used by each grade. Teachers need to know how and where to access lists of grade appropriate high frequency words, high frequency cross-subject content words and academic words that they can teach and use in class. Many of these words need to be explicitly taught, especially to struggling readers.

There are word lists available for most languages, including the South African ones, e.g. at:

https://vulabula.molteno.co.za/readers_by_language/189/all

The Foundation Phase CAPS language publications give a list of the first 100 high frequency words of the language (300 in the case of English).

Learners are generally advised to learn short high frequency words first. This will speed up automatised reading and result in better reading comprehension. However this does not necessarily mean that children should only learn simple words first. Nor does direct vocabulary instruction need to wait until children have learned to read well enough to fluently decode the words they are learning.

English sight words in the early grades

When the language is English, we have so-called sight words.

These English sight words are a small collection of words that a child should learn to recognise without sounding out the letters. They are some of the most commonly used in English but are very hard to decode phonetically – such as "the" and "said" – which have irregular spelling patterns. Good examples are "the", "was", "as", "it", "said", "eye", "knock", "knife" and "island" which cannot be sounded out using basic phonics knowledge and often cannot be represented using pictures.

The only way to 'read' these words is to identify them as sight words having memorising their correct pronunciation. Knowledge of these sight words should be reinforced by spelling them correctly.

With the African languages it is not necessary to memorise sight words as all the words have regular spelling and are easily decodable. (It is of course advantageous for such African language readers to to identify frequently used words.)

Unit 9: Self test questions

1. How would you deal with the problem of differences in the number of words known by children in a Grade 1 or other primary school phase classroom.
2. Explain the distinction between high frequency words and sight words.
3. How would you identify the high frequency words in the reading texts used in a Foundation Phase classroom (and also the sight words in English texts).
4. Where would be a good place to find examples of academic language words in use in a school?

10. Vocabulary resources

Books

Grade appropriate and engaging books are key for vocabulary development.

Word lists

Teachers need to know how and where to access lists of grade appropriate high frequency words, high frequency school subject content words and general academic words that they can teach and use in class (Nation, 2016; Lawrence *et al*, 2010). Many of these words need to be explicitly taught, especially to struggling readers and EFAL learners. (Nation, 2005, 2016).

In English there is the well-known Dale-Chall list (Chall and Dale, 1995) and the earlier Fry word list (1980).

Academic word lists

Although academic word lists are important mainly at the FET and Higher Education levels, it is useful to have access to them in the Senior Phase. One list suitable for the higher primary grades is:

https://primarycolour.home.blog/2019/06/14/tier-two-vocabulary-for-primary-teachers-the-3-4-5-list/

Dictionaries, glossaries and thesauri

Teachers should know how to teach dictionary use and, for EFAL learners, to recommend so-called English learners' dictionaries which use a restricted defining vocabulary. The most useful dictionaries include example sentences of word meanings in context, particularly when a word has several meanings. They usually have a guide to how to use the dictionary. Teachers should also be familiar with print and online visual dictionaries. Glossaries and thesauri can be used to broaden and deepen learners' knowledge of words in the Senior Phase.

Vocabulary development plans and programmes

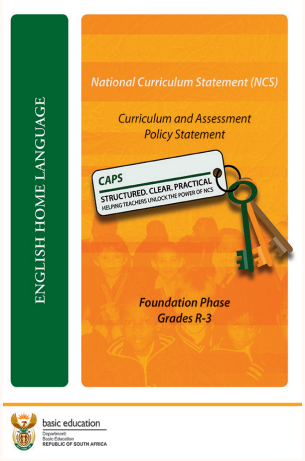
There are a large number of vocabulary development plans and resources on the internet (mainly English of course), some from public institutions, like this one:

http://oregonliteracypd.uoregon.edu/topic/vocabulary-development

and others from commercial suppliers (often the publishers of reading texts, like this one.:

https://www.education.com/lesson-plans/building-vocabulary/

Vocabulary development in curriculum guides



The CAPS for the various South African languages, both as home languages and as First Additional Languages provide substantial descriptions of how and when to teach vocabulary.

For English, the United Kingdom's Department for Education has useful guides to spelling and vocabulary (Department for Education, 2014, 2013a, 2013b).

Unit 10: Self test questions

1. Find a list of English sight words suitable for grade 1.
2. Find a list of high frequency words in your mother tongue.
3. Look at the range of learner readers in your home language on the Department of Basic Education website (https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/LearningandTeachingSupportMaterials(LTSM)/GradedReadersandBigBookHL.aspx).
4. Look at the range of readers in your home language on the African Storybook website (https://africanstorybook.org/).
5. Find a dictionary prescribed for home language learners in a primary school and have a look at its introductory pages on how to use the dictionary.

11. Special issue - English vocabulary

Apart from the general need to build up English vocabulary, the teacher needs to pay special attention to the learning and spelling of words with similar sounds but different spelling patterns. Being able to spell words when writing is more difficult in English because of its complex spelling rules. In the African languages and Afrikaans it is much easier to code words in writing.

Although English is commonly described as having irregular spelling, many of the "irregularities" obey certain rules that owe their origin to the different language sources (British, Anglo-Saxon, Norse, Norman French, Latin, Greek, and other languages) in the evolution of the English language. About 60% of all English words have Latin or Greek origins. Knowledge of these irregular spelling patterns helps learners to read new words.

To understand these English spelling complexities teachers need to have some understanding of the morphology of English and that meaningful word parts include **base words** and **word roots**, and affixes (prefixes and suffixes but no infixes) that can help learners grasp the meanings of many new words.

Base words are words that are not derived from other words. They are the word from which many other words are formed. For example, many words can be formed from the root Latin word "*migr*" (to move): migrate: migration, migrant, immigration, immigrant, migrating, and migratory.

Word roots include those from other languages such as Latin or Greek that are the origin of many English words. They are frequently found in content-area school subjects, especially in the sciences and social studies. Teachers should teach the more common root words that learners are likely to see often and teach other word roots as they occur in the textbooks.

Affixes are word units that are "fixed to" either the beginnings of words (**prefixes**) or inside words (**infixes**) or the ending of words (**suffixes**). English does not have infixes, African languages do. The word "disrespectful" has two affixes, a prefix (dis-) and a suffix (-ful). Explicitly teaching about these affixes and the way affixes relate to them dramatically enhances a learner's vocabulary. For example, teaching that the prefix dis- can mean "not" or "opposite of" makes it easier to remember the meanings of "disrespect", "dishonour", "disagree", "disinvest", etc.

If learners know the four most common prefixes in English (un-, re-, in-, and dis-), they will have important clues about the meaning of about two thirds of all English words that have prefixes. Prefixes are relatively easy to learn because they have clear meanings (for example, un- means "not" and re- means "again"); they are usually spelled the same way in different words.

Suffixes are divided into two categories:

- **Inflectional** suffixes minimally change the meaning of the base word. Examples of inflectional suffixes are -ing, -ed, and -s or -es. The difference

word root: a morpheme that expresses the basic meaning of a word and cannot be further divided into smaller morphemes. Some roots can stand alone and some cannot. Many word roots are identical to word bases.

word base: a morpheme or set of morphemes, which is itself a meaningful stand alone word, and from which other words can be created by the addition of affixes of any kind.

affix: is a morpheme that is added to the base word or stem or root of a word and modifies its meaning. A prefix appears at the front of a word, an infix inside the word and a suffix at the end of a word.

prefix: prefixes are word parts that attach to the beginning of a word or base word (a word stripped down to its simplest form) to produce a related word or an inflectional form of a word, for example the in- in "informal".

infix: infixes are inserted into a word or word base. They are rare in English but common in African languages.

suffix: a suffix is a letter or group of letters added to the ending of a word to change its meaning or grammatical function. for example -ing in "ending".

inflection: a change in the form of a word (typically the ending) to express a grammatical function or attribute such as tense, mood, person, number, case, and gender.

in meaning between "walk" and "walked" is minimal. Walk and walked are similar enough that learners can easily understand the difference. Inflectional endings are easily taught to younger learners.

- Derivational suffixes change the meaning of the word base or root word. Examples of derivational suffixes are -tion, -ous, -ite, and -or. The meaning difference between "govern" and "governor" is significant. The part of speech changes from a verb ("to govern") to a noun ("one who governs").

Learning suffixes can be difficult. This is because some suffixes have more abstract meanings than prefixes.

Many word roots in English come from other languages such as Latin or Greek that are the origin of many English words. They are frequently found in content-area school subjects, especially in the sciences and social studies. Teachers should teach the more common root words that learners are likely to see often and teach other word roots as they occur in the textbooks.

Unit 11: Self test questions

1. Explain the grammatical difference between the two articles in English giving examples.
2. How can word bases or roots help readers decode unknown words and improve vocabulary?
3. What is the meaning of the four most common English prefixes?
   un- _____
   re- _____
   in- _____
   dis- _____
4. Briefly explain the origin of the complex spelling system in English.

References

Archer, A. 2006. ***Dynamic vocabulary instruction in the Elementary school.*** Oregon: University of Oregon
Retrieved from:
http://oregonreadingfirst.uoregon.edu/downloads/instruction/big_five/dynamic_vocab_aa.pdf

Baumann, J.F., Edwards, E.C., Boland, E.M., Olejnik, S., and Kame'enui, E.J. 2003. *Vocabulary Tricks: Effects of instruction in morphology and context on fifth-grade students' ability to derive and infer word meanings*. ***American Educational Research Journal***, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 447-494
Retrieved from:
https://doi.org/10.3102%2F00028312040002447

Baumann, J.F., Font, G., Edwards, E.C. and Boland, E. 2005. *Strategies for teaching middle-grade students to use word-part and context clues*. In: Hiebert, E.H. and Kamil, M.I. (Eds). 2005. ***Teaching and learning vocabulary: Bringing research to practice***. Mahwah, New Jersey: Erlbaum

Beck, I.L. and McKeon, M.G. 1985. Teaching vocabulary: *Making the instruction fit the goal*. ***Educational Perspectives,*** Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 111-15

Beck, I.L., McKeown, MG., and Kucan, L. 2013. ***Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction***. 2nd Edition. New York: Guilford

Biemiller, A. 2005. *Size and sequence in vocabulary development: Implications for choosing words for primary grade vocabulary instruction*. In: Herbert, E.H. and Kamil, M.L. (Eds). 2005. ***Teaching and learning vocabulary: Bringing research to practice***. Mahwah, New Jersey: Erlbaum

Blachowicz, C. and Peter Fisher, P. 2011. A *Word for the Words*. ***Educational Leadership***, Volume 68, Number 6, March 2011
Retrieved from:
http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar11/vol68/num06/A-Word-for-the-Words.aspx

Coxhead, A. J. 1998. ***An academic word list*** (English Language Institute Occasional Publication No. 18). Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University of Wellington

Dale-Chall List (Chall, J.S. and Dale, E. 1995. ***Readability revisited: The new Dale-Chall readability formula***. Brookline, Massachusetts: Brookline Books).

de Schryver, G-M. 2010. *Revolutionising Bantu lexicography – a Zulu case study*. ***Lexicos***, Vol. 20, pp. 161-201
Retrieved from:
https://tshwanedje.com/publications/Zulu-Gram.pdf

Department of Basic Education. 2011a. ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy. Foundation Phase. Grades R-3. English Home Language***. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education
Retrieved from:
https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/CD/National%20Curriculum%20Statements%20and%20Vocational/CAPS%20English%20HL%20GRADES%20R-3%20FS.pdf?ver=2015-01-27-154201-167

Department of Basic Education. 2011b. ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy. Intermediate Phase Grades 4-6. English Home Language***. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education
Retrieved from:
https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/CD/National%20Curriculum%20Statements%20and%20Vocational/CAPS%20IP%20%20HOME%20ENGLISH%20GR%204-6%20%20WEB.pdf?ver=2015-01-27-160412-720

Department of Basic Education. 2011c. ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy. Senior Phase Grades 7-9. English Home Language***. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education
Retrieved from:
https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/CD/National%20Curriculum%20Statements%20and%20Vocational/CAPS%20SP%20%20HL%20%20ENGLISH%20GR%207-9%20%20web.pdf?ver=2015-01-27-155553-090

Department of Basic Education. 2011d. ***Curriculum and Assessment Policy. Foundation Phase Grades 1-3. English First Additional Language***. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education
Retrieved from:
https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/CD/National%20Curriculum%20Statements%20and%20Vocational/CAPS%20ENGLISH%20FAL%20GR%201-3%20FS.pdf?ver=2015-01-27-155321-957

Department of Basic Education. 2020. ***National Framework for the Teaching of reading in African Languages in the Foundation Phase***. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education
Retrieved from:
https://www.jet.org.za/clearinghouse/projects/primted/curriculum-frameworks/literacy-curriculum-frameworks/national-framework-for-the-teaching-of-reading-in-african-languages-in-the-fp-201907.pdf

Department of Education. 2013a. ***English appendix 1: spelling***. Manchester: Department for Education
Retrieved from:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239784/English_Appendix_1_-_Spelling.pdf

Department of Education. 2013b. ***English appendix 2: vocabulary, grammar and punctuation***. Manchester: Department for Education
Retrieved from:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335190/English_Appendix_2_-_Vocabulary_grammar_and_punctuation.pdf

Department of Education. 2014. ***National curriculum in England: English programmes of study***. Manchester: Department of Education https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study

Fry, 1980. ***Word Lists: Fry Instant Words***. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah State Office of Education https://schoolnotes.com/files/BCCSKA/Fry1000inwords.pdf

Hirsch, E.D. 1987. Cultural Literacy: What every American needs to know. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin

Hirsch, E.D. 2004. ***The New First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy: What your child needs to know***. Boston, Massachusetts: Mariner

Hirsch, E.D., Kett, J.F., and Trefil, T. 2002. ***The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy: What every American needs to know.*** New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Honig, B., Diamond, L., and Gutlohn, L. 2018. ***Teaching Reading Sourcebook***. Third Edition. Novato, California: Arena Press

Johnson, D.D., Moe, A.J., and Baumann, J.F. 1983. ***The Ginn word book for teachers: A basic lexicon***. Boston: Ginn

Lawrence, J.F., White, C., and Snow, C.E. 2010. *The Words Students Need.* ***Educational Leadership***, Volume 68, Number 2, pp. 23-26 Retrieved from: http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct10/vol68/num02/The-Words-Students-Need.aspx

Moat, L.C. 2005. *How spelling supports reading,* ***American Educator,*** Winter 2005/06 Retrieved from: https://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/winter-2005-2006/how-spelling-supports-reading

Nation, I.S.P. 2001. ***Learning vocabulary in another language***. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Nation, I.S.P. 2005. *Teaching vocabulary.* ***Asian EFL Journal***, September 2005 Retrieved from: https://asian-efl-journal.com/sept_05_pn.pdf

Nation, I.S.P. 2016. ***Making and using word lists for language learning and testing***. Amsterdam: John Benjamins

Read, J. 2010. ***Assessing vocabulary***. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Scarborough H. S. 2001. *Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice.* In: Neuman, S. and Dickinson, D. (Eds). 2001. ***Handbook for research in early literacy***. New York, New York: Guilford Press, pp. 97-110

Texas Education Agency. 2002. ***Promoting vocabulary development: components of effective vocabulary instruction.*** Austin, texas: Texas Education Agency
Retrieved from:
https://buildingrti.utexas.org/sites/default/files/booklets/redbk5.pdf

University of Oregon. n.d. *Sequencing Vocabulary Skills*. Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon, Center on Teaching and Learning
Retrieved from:
http://reading.uoregon.edu/big_ideas/voc/voc_sequence.php

Self test answers

Unit 1: Oral and written vocabularies

1. **In everyday speech we usually make use of only about** 400 **to** 600 **words**.
2. **Distinguish between passive and active vocabularies.**

   A passive vocabulary is the words you recognize and understand.

   The active vocabulary is the words you use in speech and writing.
3. **Indicate whether these statements are true or false.**

   All children when entering school know more or less the same number of words. False.

   Children who come from wealthy backgrounds typically have larger vocabularies. True.

   A person who wishes to study at university probably needs to know at least 10 000 words. False. [It is probably about double that – about 20 000.]
4. **Define morpheme and word root.**

   A **morpheme** is the smallest meaningful grammatical unit of a language, that cannot be further divided.

   A **word root** is a a morpheme that expresses the basic meaning of a word and cannot be further divided into smaller morphemes.
5. **Where does most learned vocabulary come from?** Reading [rather than from explicit instruction.]

Unit 2: The importance of reading in vocabulary development

1. **What percentage of the words in a text does one need to know to make sense of it, to comprehend its meaning?** About 95%.
2. **Is it true that children usually understand a new word after having it explained only once.**

   No. False. Multiple exposures to new words are usually needed.
3. **What is reading fluency?**

   Reading fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with meaningful expression. Fluent readers can recognize a high percentage of words automatically and read at an appropriate pace.

Unit 3: Explicit instruction on vocabulary

1. **Direct vocabulary instruction is particularly important for people with** weak oral language skills**.**

2. **In Grade 1 children should be taught at least two / ~~ten~~/ ~~twenty~~ words each school day.**

3. **What words should be taught first?**

   High frequency words in speech and texts. Concrete words with clear contexts.

4. **In teaching a new word what should the teacher explain?**

   The word's meaning, typical use, and meanings in various contexts.

5. **What are function words?**

   Words that hold together and help structure sentences, [for example, in English, articles like "the" and "a", conjunctions of various kinds like "and", "but", "either/ or" and "after", "however", pronouns like "he", "she", ", prepositions such as "on", "at", "outside" and auxiliary verbs such as "is", "am", "are", "will", "would".]

6. **Distinguish between an antonym and a synonym and between a simile, a metaphor and an idiom.**

   An antonym of a word is a word with an opposite meaning and a synonym is a word with the same or very similar meaning.
   A simile is a comparison of one thing with another usually using the word "like" or "as".
   A metaphor identifies one thing with another, saying that it is the other thing, without using any comparison words.
   An idiom is a phrase which carries a different meaning to the literal meaning of the words.

7. **Define a polyseme and give an example.**

   A word with several different meanings, e.g. "bright" (light) and "bright" (clever); "pitch" (throw), "pitch" (a tent), "pitch" (tar).

8. **Give an example of a homophone.**

   Bare/bear; Sea/see; Some/sum; Steal/steel, Meat/meet; etc.

Unit 4: Word learning strategies: morphemic analysis

1. **Briefly describe morphemic analysis as an aid in understanding the emaning of words.**

   Determining the meaning of a word based upon identifying the word root and its meaning and that meaning as modified by the affixes (prefixes, infixes and suffixes) attached to that word root

2. **Name two classical languages which provide the root words in many English words.**

   Greek and Latin.

3. **What is a word family?**

   A set of words all derived from one base word through inflections and/or the attachment of affixes.

4. **Give at least six examples of words in the word family based on the English word base "work".**

   working, worked, worker, rework, overwork, overworked, workman, workshop, worktime, workforce, workload, workmate, homework, housework, teamwork, woodwork, workstation, paperwork, artwork, handiwork, workable, unworkable, etc.

5. **Find the meaning of these prefixes in English and give an example of each in a word: bi, inter, mis, mono, non, pre, post, semi, super**

bi	(two)	bicycle, biped, bigamy
inter	(among, between)	internet, international, intercede
mis	(wrong, astray)	mishap, misfortune, misinformation, misbehave
mono	(only, sole)	monogamy, monosyllabic, monotone
non	(not)	nonsense, nonexistent, non-fiction
pre	(before)	prelude, prevent, prequel
post	(after)	postpone, postscript
semi	(half)	semicircle, semisphere. semidetached
super	(above, over)	supernatural, superior, supervisor

Unit 5: Word learning strategies: contextual analysis

1. **What is a context**?

   In reading or listening, the text or speech that comes immediately before and after a particular phrase or piece of text and that may help understanding of its meaning. More broadly, a context is the background situation or environment that influences some thing or event.

2. **Describe how a reader can use contextual clues to get the meaning of words.**

   The reader can look for clues in the surrounding text - definitions, explanations, synonyms and antonyms of the unknown word - and use knowledge of the particular subject or one more general background knowledge to see if the meaning fo the word can be inferred.

Unit 6: Word learning strategies: dictionary use

1. **Identify the following on this example entry from the top of a page in an English dictionary:**

   guide word / part of speech / pronunciation guide / different meanings of the word /etymology of the word

gasket | -gate

gasket /ˈgaskɪt/ > **n**. **1** a sheet or ring of rubber or other material sealing the junction between two surfaces in an engine or other device. **2** archaic a cord securing a furled sail to the yard of a sailing ship.
— ORIGIN C17: perh. from Fr. garcette 'thin rope' (orig. 'little girl').

The page heading gasket | -gate refers to the first entry on the page (gasket) and the last entry on the page (-gate).

The **n** refers to the part of speech – a noun.

The pronunciation /'gaskIt/ is given using the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Two different meanings of the word are given **1** and **2.** The second is an archaic (old fashioned) meaning.

The etymological origins of the word come from the 17th Century (C17), perhaps from a French word "garcette" meaning a thin rope which itself comes from the French term for a "little girl".

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): Speech sounds (phones) are represented by the set of symbols in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). This set of symbols represents every single known sound in human speech in all languages. These phonetic symbols in the IPA are used to represent the slightest differences between speech sounds.

Unit 7: Academic language vocabularies

1. **What do the abbreviations CALP and BICS stand for?**

   CALP: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

   BICS: Basic Interpersonal Communication

2. **Why is it important for children to understand the academic language words used in assessment questions?**

   Because they specify very precisely what tasks the child has to do to answer or respond to the question correctly.

3. **Explain what it is to parse a word or a sentence.**

   To parse a word is to describe it by stating its part of speech, form and relationship to the syntax of the sentence it is in. To parse a sentence is to break the sentence into its constituent parts of speech such as subject, verb, object, with an explanation of the form, function, and syntactical function and relationship of each part.

4. **This is the first set of the most high frequency academic words in English in Coxhead's *Academic Word List.* Which of these words do you think it reasonable to expect primary school children to know by the end of the Senior Phase (if their main language of instruction is English)?**

   sector • available • financial • process • individual • specific • principle • estimate • variables • method • data • research • contract • environment • export • source • assessment • policy • identified • create • derived • factors • procedure • definition • assume • theory • benefit • evidence • established • authority • major • issues • labour • occur • economic • involved • percent • interpretation • consistent • income • structure • legal • concept • formula • section • required • constitutional • analysis • distribution • function • area • approach • role • legislation • indicate • response • period • context • significant • similar

   My opinion is that all of them should be known.

Unit 8: Assessing vocabulary knowledge

1. **On page 30 there is a list of 22 assessment techniques. How familiar are you with them? Consider whether you would be able to implement them.**

   Your answer. If you do not feel confident that you could implement them consider consulting some books on vocabulary assessment.

2. **What word parts are recognisable in the English word "unfortunately"? Use an English dictionary if necessary.**

   There are four mophemes in "un-fortun(e)-ate-ly", three affixes (one prefix, two suffixes) plus the root morpheme:
   un - prefix meaning "not"
   fortun(e) - word root originally meaning "position in life as determined by wealth"
   ate - suffix meaning "to make"
   ly - suffix meaning "in the manner of"

   So "unfortunately" is a word meaning literally "not in the manner of making a fortune" and more broadly meaning experience of something or an event that has taken place that is sad, disappointing or unpleasant.

Unit 9: Planning vocabulary development

1. **How would you deal with the problem of differences in the number of words known by children in a Grade 1 or other primary school phase classroom.**

   There are various possible answers to this. You might want to find out what kind of gap exists between those who know few words and those who know many. Then you might give extra vocabulary instruction to those with a deficit. You might concentrate on the key high frequency words that they do not know. This would need to be done systematically over the school year.

2. **Explain the distinction between high frequency words and sight words.**

   High frequency words are the words that people use most often in speech or writing. Sight words is a term for a few high frequency English words that are difficult to decode phoneticaly because of their irregular spelling and should be learned by sight.

3. **How would you identify the high frequency words in the reading texts used in a Foundation Phase classroom (and also the sight words in English texts).**

   Obtain the published lists of grade appropriate high frequency words (from the internet, the CAPS publications, etc.) in the particular language and check how often these words appear in the reading texts.

4. **Where would be a good place to find examples of academic language words in use in a school?**

   Old examination papers and copies of tests.

Unit 10: Vocabulary resources

1. **Find a list of English sight words suitable for grade 1.**
2. **Find a list of high frequency words in your mother tongue.**
3. **Look at the range of learner readers in your home language on the Department of Basic Education website (https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/LearningandTeachingSupportMaterials(LTSM)/GradedReadersandBigBookHL.aspx).**
4. **Look at the range of readers in your home language on the African Storybook website (https://africanstorybook.org/).**
5. **Find a dictionary prescribed for home language learners in a primary school and have a look at its introductory pages on how to use the dictionary.**

All these questions rely on your own 'answers'.

Unit 11: Special issue – English vocabulary

1. **Explain the grammatical difference between the two articles in English giving examples.**

   The article "a" refers to any thing of that type, "a cat" could be any cat whereas "the" refers to a specific thing, so "the cat" is a specific individual cat.

2. **How can word bases or roots help readers decode unknown words and improve vocabulary?**

   They provide the basic meaning of the word before its meaning may be modified or extended by affixes or inflections.

3. **What is the meaning of the four most common English prefixes?**

   un- not
   re- again
   in- not
   dis- not, opposite of

4. **Briefly explain the origin of the complex spelling system in English.**

   English vocabulary draws on all the languages that have influenced the formation of modern English – British, Anglo-Saxon, Norse, Norman French, Latin, Greek and other languages. In many cases the spelling of words uses the spelling of those original languages though the words may no longer be pronounced that way in English and now the spelling seems irregular, though if one understands the form the spelling takes it may give valuable clues as to the meaning of the word or parts of the word.

PrimTEd Teaching Reading Study Guides

Study guide 6: Vocabulary

© 2021 Department of Higher Education and Training

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

This is a short and basic guide to the development of vocabulary knowledge and use in the primary school.

The study guide includes short self-tests for each unit in the study guide.

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Primary Teacher Education Project of the Department of Higher Education and Training and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA