

Other things to try: 8a

Developing vocabulary skills using 'word webs'

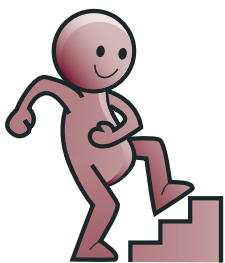


Why is this important?

'Word webs' build vocabulary. They help children make links between new vocabulary and old vocabulary which means that words can be stored (and retrieved) more accurately/easily and links in meaning can be made. This technique is also referred to as 'mind mapping'.

What to do

- Develop a list of words unfamiliar to the child – this could be new topic vocabulary or words that could arise during everyday activities.
- Introduce the new word (e.g. 'winter').
- Write the word 'winter' in the middle of a piece of paper.
- Ask the child what he/she knows about 'winter'. The child might say 'snow' or 'cold'.
- If the child can't think of anything, find a story about winter (e.g. about a snowman or Christmas) and then start the discussion from there.
- Think about how words might link together and think about action words (e.g. 'shivering', 'sledging') as well as adjectives to describe winter.
- Talk about different clothes to wear in winter and the weather that winter brings.
- Encourage the child to lead the conversation and write down his/her ideas linking them together (e.g. 'winter' links to 'cold' and 'snow'). Think of other things that are cold (e.g. ice-cream).



Step up

- Talk about opposites (e.g. 'winter' vs. 'summer').
- Talk about the months that make up winter.
- Find someone who has a birthday in winter and talk about different activities to do in winter as opposed to summer (e.g. stay inside more, put the fire on to keep warm).

Step down

- Start by talking about things that the child can see (e.g. snow). This is easier to begin with as the child can relate to it.
- Make a 'picture' word web.
- Use real objects to demonstrate the connections.

