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THE MOST PRECIOUS COMMODITY

The world is forever changing, becoming smaller, and at an exponential rate over the last 20 years due to technology, politics, economics and social norms changing beyond recognition. It's hard to keep up. The world is a very fast-moving place now for young people to be; technology has rapidly become virtually indispensable for everyone. Video games, smartphones, apps, social media, virtual reality and television are developed and consumed at a mind-boggling rate. There are so many fabulous innovations and advances that make the world a more exciting place to live. All the while, people and families are becoming increasingly busy, and even with all of these technological conveniences, time is still the most precious commodity. And that is why what you do with your pupils during the short time you spend with them is critical.

For just a moment, let's forget financial poverty and political climates, and think carefully about our pupils living in 'word poverty'. When we think about word poverty, it's important to think about all pupils, not just pupils who may be living in actual poverty. Word poverty is all about time and exposure. How much of our pupils' time involves exposure to high-quality language, words and vocabulary? Pupils will always spend significantly more time at home or in environments other than school. It's during these times that individual experiences and exposure to language will vary dramatically. Some pupils will read daily, be read to and have diverse conversations filled with expressive language with adults who have robust vocabularies of their own. Lots of children won't have this experience.

The pupils in your care might only be exposed to your enriched environment for 30 of 168 hours in a week. That's only 17 per cent of every week that is spent in a language-rich and hopefully word-wealthy environment where words are celebrated, played with and valued. Take away break times, lunchtimes,

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BECOMING A NINJA

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NINJA NOTES

Make time for vocabulary each day. Just five to 15 minutes. You won't regret it.

We can't create more time, and the curriculum is demanding. Go back to the principles of being a Vocabulary Ninja. Every interaction, every conversation, every minute, every lesson, every day is vital – it's about the sum of all the small parts and valuing the marginal gains of each interaction, taking pride in the micro-victories and evaluating your micro-defeats. We have to make the most of the time that pupils are with us in school.

What is mind blowing about numbers like these is that, considering how little time might actually be spent on 'language' in the grand scheme, you do an amazing job in the short space of time that you actually have with your pupils. Vivid and heart-breaking narratives, emotive poetry, captivating diary entries and forensic non-fiction reports – it's all magnificent.

Some pupils, in fact a large proportion of pupils, will spend a much larger percentage of time doing things other than being exposed to high-quality language. And believe it or not, this is OK. We want children to live exciting lives out in the world, kicking balls, climbing trees, gaming, having sleepovers and so on. But, not everyone lives in this idealistic land of childhood.

This raises two very important issues to be aware of. One is that the time that pupils spend with you in school is extremely precious, more valuable than you previously realised. Every interaction, every conversation, every minute, every hour, every day is unspeakably valuable. Two, language and vocabulary must be at the centre of everything that we do in every aspect of the school day; confining it to one lesson just isn't good enough.

for teacher and learners, we must begin to develop a more open culture where each new word offers an opportunity for grammatical discussion. We need to be more forensic in our approach to each word that we encounter. The brilliant thing about discussing grammar while discussing words is that it offers up context, making any discussions and learning more memorable. Some of the most memorable contexts will undoubtedly come from the books that you are reading in class. This is why exposure to high-quality literature is so important. Subsequent chapters will provide glossaries, agreed terminology, activities and strategies to improve the teaching and learning of grammar in your classroom.

WHERE TO FIND INSPIRATION AND SUPPORT

Literacy, reading, writing, grammar, spelling and vocabulary are all inextricably (awesome word meaning 'impossible to disentangle or separate') linked – no one area is more important than any other; the success of one stems from another. Developing your ninja mentality and a forensic classroom culture are essential if your pupils are to learn. Your journey towards a ninja mentality and forensic classroom culture will allow you to be fully engaged with every learning moment that words present.

Ultimately, I want to convince you that making vocabulary a priority is worthwhile and to provoke you into thinking about how you can improve. Undoubtedly there will be significant barriers. Will those barriers go away? Probably not. So it will be tough, that's for sure. Definitely use research to support what you do, seek the support of other professionals, and read a journal or become active on Twitter. (Personally, I'd suggest the latter!) If you do decide to dive into the world of #EduTwitter, opposite are a few accounts that you should think about following and some of the hashtags to use while tweeting, to connect with the vast education community based on Twitter.

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vocabulary, language and books. A true advocate of the word. Constantly sharing ideas and good practice. Creator and curator of 'The Word Gang'.



Vocabulary Verbivore

@**VerbivoreTeach**

A devourer of words and consumer of language. Another fabulous collection of vocabulary resources, ideas and pedagogy. A real must for any pedagogical arsenal.

leader. Tim is a genuine lover of books and promoter of teaching ideas for primary English and grammar.



Writing and literacy

Sophie Bee
@**_MissieBee**

Teacher, blogger and English lead. Self-professed grammar pedant and number nerd. Sophie offers high quality teaching discussion, resources and analysis!



Vocabulary Alex Quigley

@**HuntingEnglish**

English teacher, Associate at Education Endowment Foundation and author of 'Closing the Vocabulary Gap'. A modern authority on vocabulary research.



Writing

Parky Teaches
@**Parky_teaches**

A KS2 teacher, blogger, writing ambassador and creator of the Pens of Calligra @LostPens. Inspirer of writing in the classroom.



Vocabulary Robert Macfarlane

@**RobGMacfarlane**

Author of 'The Lost Words' and wordsmith. Rob shares intriguing language on a regular basis.



SPaG and GaPs

Mr. M
@**TheTeacherTrain**

One of the most creative, exciting and inspirational teachers in education. Creator of MC Grammar and Resilient Reader – Legends of Literacy Creator.

General teaching inspiration (not exhaustive)

Chris Dyson, @chrisdysonHT

Graham Andre, @grahamandre

Miss Khan, @MissKhan__

Miss Merrill, @MissSMerrill

Ed Finch, @MrEFinch

Colin Grimes, @MrGPrimary

David Keyte, @Mr_K_Teacher

#Hashtags to use

#PrimaryRocks

#EduTwitter

#ReadingRocks

#BrewEd

#TheGoldenH


#EdTech

#EdChat

#Teacher

The best thing about collecting feedback via social media is that it creates a shared community that everyone can draw upon. Have a look and then take the principles of being a Vocabulary Ninja and adapt them for yourself, your context and your pupils.

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6 Sep 2017

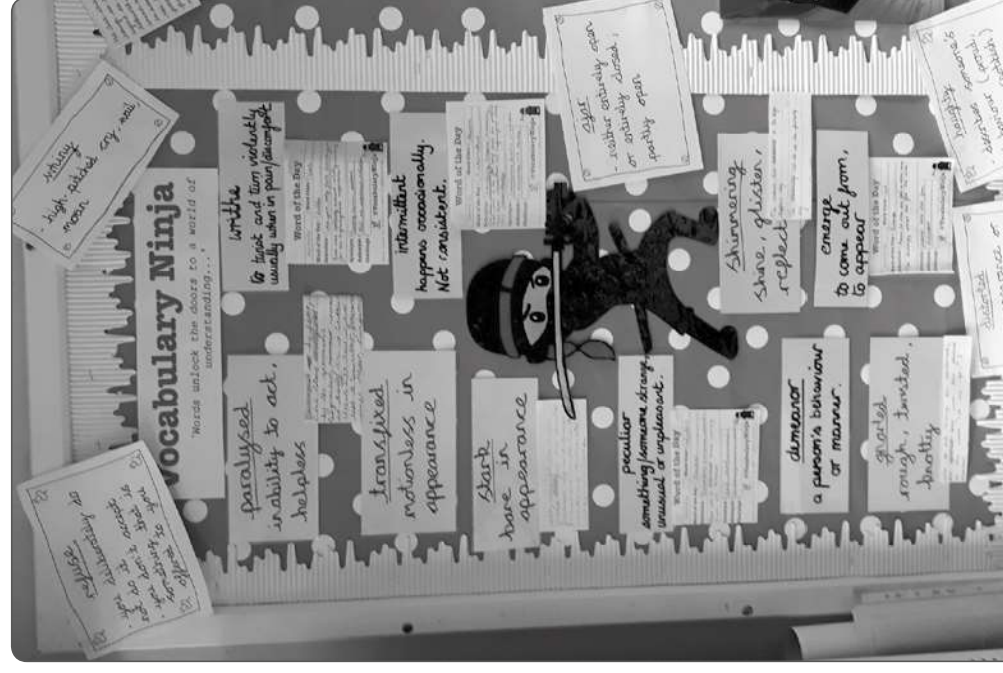
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6 Sep 2017

SS2 Word of the Day (noun)
the Day : **apologise**
on : express regret for having done something wrong.

apologise (verb)
an-ə-ˈlɒj-ə-ˌsaɪz
to apologise, you're not sorry!
age : Use WOD in a multi-clause sentence.
 @VocabularyNinja
back the door for a world of understanding.






 **Chris Jacques**
@MrCJ248

The Ninja is working hard in our class. @VocabularyNinja

1 Mar 2018



 **Miss Verny**
@SomersPark4NV

It is #inevitable 4NV use #copious words of the day while writing. Endless #possibilities to include #unpredictable vocabulary, without #grimacing. You may even say they do so #nonchalantly. They #anticipate it eagerly and are #fastidious in their application. @VocabularyNinja

13 Nov 2018

This small snapshot of 'impact' comes from real classrooms, real pupils and real teachers who are overcoming real barriers. The impact is real; it isn't reported about in a renowned scientific journal, forgotten about in some dusty room or filed neatly in an archive. It is alive, it's breathing, every single day, all across the world! This is something that Vocabulary Ninja is incredibly proud of, and the sentiments of teachers like @MrGPrimary (aka Colin Grimes, former soldier and currently a class teacher from Rothbury, in Northumberland) are the only peer reviews I will ever value!

But before any of that will truly make a difference, you have to be ready to make a change and become a little bit more ninja. I know you can do it. I believe in you already!



Miss H
@Miss_SH_teacher

**Taking up only
cupboard door
but most power
displays in my
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Today's "torren
words will crop
poetry I'm sure**

