

Pre-Teaching Vocabulary (PTV)

In order to learn new vocabulary and language children need three things simultaneously:

- experiences
- adults telling them the words
- repetition.

Children need around fifty meaningful exposures of new language where the vocabulary is labelled by the adult through an experience where the adult and child play and talk together.

Through observation and planning of learning, practitioners should reflect on the vocabulary which children already have, the vocabulary which is useful for children to learn and the experiences which support the acquisition of the vocabulary.

This resource includes links to [Pre-Teaching Vocabulary \(PTV\) materials](#) developed by Pip St John.

Planned vocabulary instruction has a benefit on children's access to and engagement with the context, as well as the transferability of language in everyday interactions and across the curriculum.

St John, P (2016) Pre-Teaching Vocabulary: Using visual prompts to teach independent word learning in children, What Works Edition, www.pipstjohn.co.uk

What is Pre-Teaching Vocabulary (PTV)?

Pre-Teaching Vocabulary (PTV) is a principled approach which can be used when teaching new vocabulary. The strategies within PTV are designed to be used as a whole-school approach to vocabulary development, integrated into practitioners' everyday interactions and teaching across the curriculum.

PTV encourages a focus on the key 'goldilocks' words needed by children to effectively understand the vocabulary used in their classroom. It helps reinforce the importance of developing word knowledge to improve and enhance language and reading comprehension.

How to use PTV strategies

There are three steps which inform your planning of vocabulary teaching using PTV strategies:

- **Step 1:** Within the context of learning, write down the vocabulary which you expect the children to encompass as part of the context.
- **Step 2:** Use the "tiered" approach of Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 to organise your vocabulary.
- **Step 3:** Focusing on the Tier 2 vocabulary (goldilocks words) identify how you're going to plan learning around the vocabulary in everyday interactions and through explicit teaching.

Step 1: Identifying the language from your context

When planning for each context of learning, it is recommended that practitioners write down all of the vocabulary which they expect the children will encompass through the context.

e.g. The teacher of a P1/2 class who were going to be looking at the context of “Looking after myself” identified the following vocabulary:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> arm | <input type="checkbox"/> body | <input type="checkbox"/> jump | <input type="checkbox"/> head |
| <input type="checkbox"/> big | <input type="checkbox"/> little | <input type="checkbox"/> red | <input type="checkbox"/> brown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> blindfold | <input type="checkbox"/> rough | <input type="checkbox"/> smooth | <input type="checkbox"/> hard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> foot | <input type="checkbox"/> hand | <input type="checkbox"/> eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> ears |
| <input type="checkbox"/> furry | <input type="checkbox"/> fluffy | <input type="checkbox"/> squishy | <input type="checkbox"/> seeing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> green | <input type="checkbox"/> blue | <input type="checkbox"/> noise | <input type="checkbox"/> blond |
| <input type="checkbox"/> leg | <input type="checkbox"/> teeth | <input type="checkbox"/> apples | <input type="checkbox"/> bananas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mouth | <input type="checkbox"/> nose | <input type="checkbox"/> hair | <input type="checkbox"/> fingers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> movement | <input type="checkbox"/> heartbeat | <input type="checkbox"/> self portrait | <input type="checkbox"/> fruit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> photograph | <input type="checkbox"/> tall | <input type="checkbox"/> vegetables | <input type="checkbox"/> knee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> short | <input type="checkbox"/> long | <input type="checkbox"/> elbow | <input type="checkbox"/> noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sight | <input type="checkbox"/> hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> taste | <input type="checkbox"/> soft |
| <input type="checkbox"/> touch | <input type="checkbox"/> loud | <input type="checkbox"/> quiet | <input type="checkbox"/> joint |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wrist | <input type="checkbox"/> nails | <input type="checkbox"/> healthy | |

Step 2: Organising words using the Tiered approach

There are three levels of words, known as “Tiers”, in the PTV approach which supports practitioners through their planning of vocabulary instruction. Parsons & Branagan (2014) call tier 1, 2 and 3 words “anchor words”, “goldilocks words” and “step on words”. The tiers are specific to the group of children that you are working with, taking into consideration their stage of language development and the vocabulary knowledge that they already have.

Word Categories for PTV		
Tier 1 (Anchor words)	Tier 2 (Goldilocks words)	Tier 3 (Step-on words)
The words from the context which most children will already have as part of their understanding and expressive language.	The words from the context which can be transferred across a number of different contexts.	Subject specific vocabulary to the context.

The PTV approach recommends that practitioners focus on the Tier 2 (Goldilocks) words when planning their vocabulary instruction through everyday interactions and explicit teaching. Tier 2 vocabulary has the greatest impact on children’s language development as the vocabulary which has been selected is transferable across a number of contexts. Whilst there is an emphasis on the targeted instruction of Tier 2 vocabulary, practitioners will still use Tier 1 and Tier 3 vocabulary when children are learning about the context.

e.g. The teacher of the P1/2 class who were going to be looking at the context of “Looking after myself”, reflected on the word list from step 1 and organised the vocabulary into the three tiers for the children in their class. The teacher could then focus on planning learning experiences which allowed the children to experience all of the vocabulary from Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 as well as targeted instruction on the transferable Tier 2 vocabulary.

Tier 1/ Anchor	Tier2/ Goldilocks	Tier3/ Step-on
Leg teeth Apples bananas Arm Body jump Head Foot Hand Eyes Ears Mouth Nose Hair Fingers Big Little Red Brown Green Blue Noise	Blond photograph Tall Vegetables, Fruit Touch Loud, quiet, soft Blindfold Rough smooth hard, furry, fluffy, squishy, Seeing/sight Hearing Taste Noise Short Long Elbow, Knee, Wrist, Nails Healthy	Joint Movement Heartbeat Self Portrait

Step 3: Planning for vocabulary instruction

When planning for vocabulary instruction there are three key elements which practitioners should consider:

- **Semantics** – what does it mean?
- **Phonological Awareness** – how does it sound?
- **Kinaesthetic/ Visual** – objects, visuals and gestures to represent the word.

Through their planning, practitioners should identify how they’re going to plan learning around the vocabulary in:

- everyday interactions and
- through explicit teaching.

Learning new vocabulary through everyday interactions – make comments to develop new vocabulary

To learn vocabulary children need adults to model vocabulary alongside their experiences, practitioners should plan the environment, e.g. through texts about the topic, wall displays, role play opportunities etc., so that there are opportunities to comment using the vocabulary from the context as the children experience it through a variety of situations. This allows for repetition of the new vocabulary.

For further information:

- [Making Comments](#)
- [Verbal Reasoning and Abstract Thinking](#).

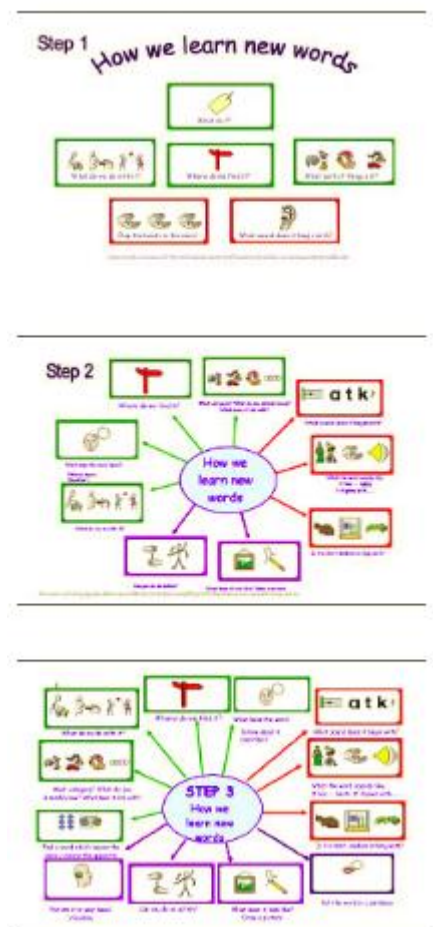
Learning new vocabulary through explicit instruction

The [PTV guidance from Pip St. John](#) provides practitioners with resources to plan for Tier 2 vocabulary development through explicit instruction covering the three key elements of semantics, phonological awareness and kinaesthetic/ visual.

The resources colour code the three elements in the following way:

- **Semantics** – what does it mean? (**Green is what it means**)
- **Phonological Awareness** – how does it sound? (**Red is what is said**)
- **Kinaesthetic/ Visual** – objects, visuals and gestures to represent the word (**Blue is what you do**).

There are three different word wheels which are available for practitioners to use as prompts for teaching the Tier 2 vocabulary. The word wheels contain a series of questions. These questions are for the adult to consider when planning their vocabulary lesson, not for the child to answer. Practitioners should select the word wheel which is the most developmentally appropriate for the children that they are working with.

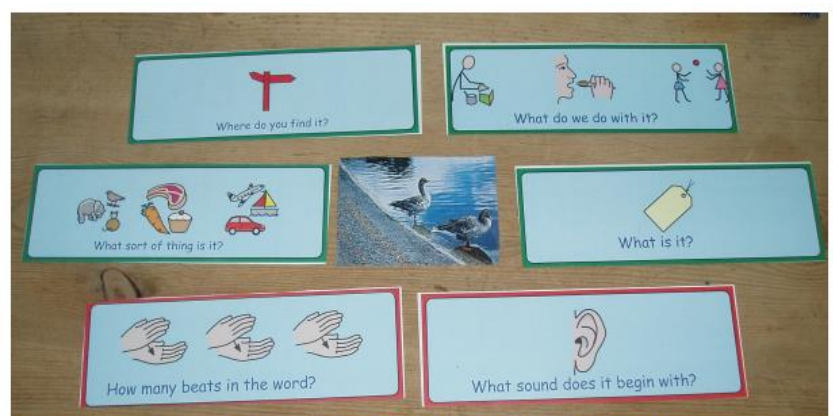


Practitioners should identify the most appropriate way to use the word wheels to support their vocabulary teaching based on the children's stage of development. Examples of this could be:

The practitioner is introducing the concept of the word "fowl" using the Step 1 poster with a P1 class.

Prompt cards are used to support the practitioners in making comments about the semantics and the phonological awareness.

The kinaesthetic/ visual is represented by a photograph. Practitioners should aim to make this as concrete as possible.



The Step 1 prompts, here being used for the word "fowl".

The practitioner is introducing the concept of the word “banquet” using the Step 3 poster with a P6 class.

The word wheel is used to support the discussion about a banquet, recording the aspects of semantics and phonological awareness.

The practitioner has used a photograph of a banquet to represent the kinaesthetic/ visual.

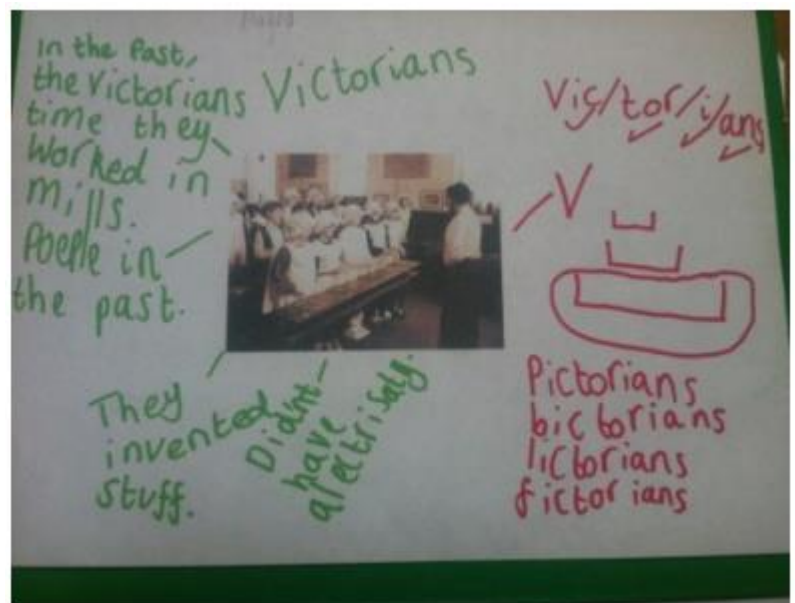
This is displayed in the classroom environment for the group of children to refer back to.



Once children are familiar with using the word maps led by an adult, they can also be used to support independent reinforcement of vocabulary.

In this example, the child has used the word map to make their own word knowledge map when learning about the Victorians.

The child used a photograph to represent the kinaesthetic/ visual and recorded semantic and phonological awareness aspects linked to the word.



PTV as part of medium term planning

When planning each learning context it is recommended that practitioners use the PTV approach to support vocabulary instruction as part of the context of learning.

Including a section for Tier 2 vocabulary as part of medium term planning supports practitioners in taking a whole-school approach to vocabulary instruction. Through the planning for learning, teaching and assessment cycle, practitioners have reported that taking the time to plan for vocabulary instruction not only has a benefit on children’s access to and engagement with the context, but also in the transferability of language in everyday interactions and across the curriculum.