

Every teacher is a language teacher

How all teachers can help all learners develop their writing skills

Lauren C Woods

Tuesday 19 March 2024

Today, we will explore:

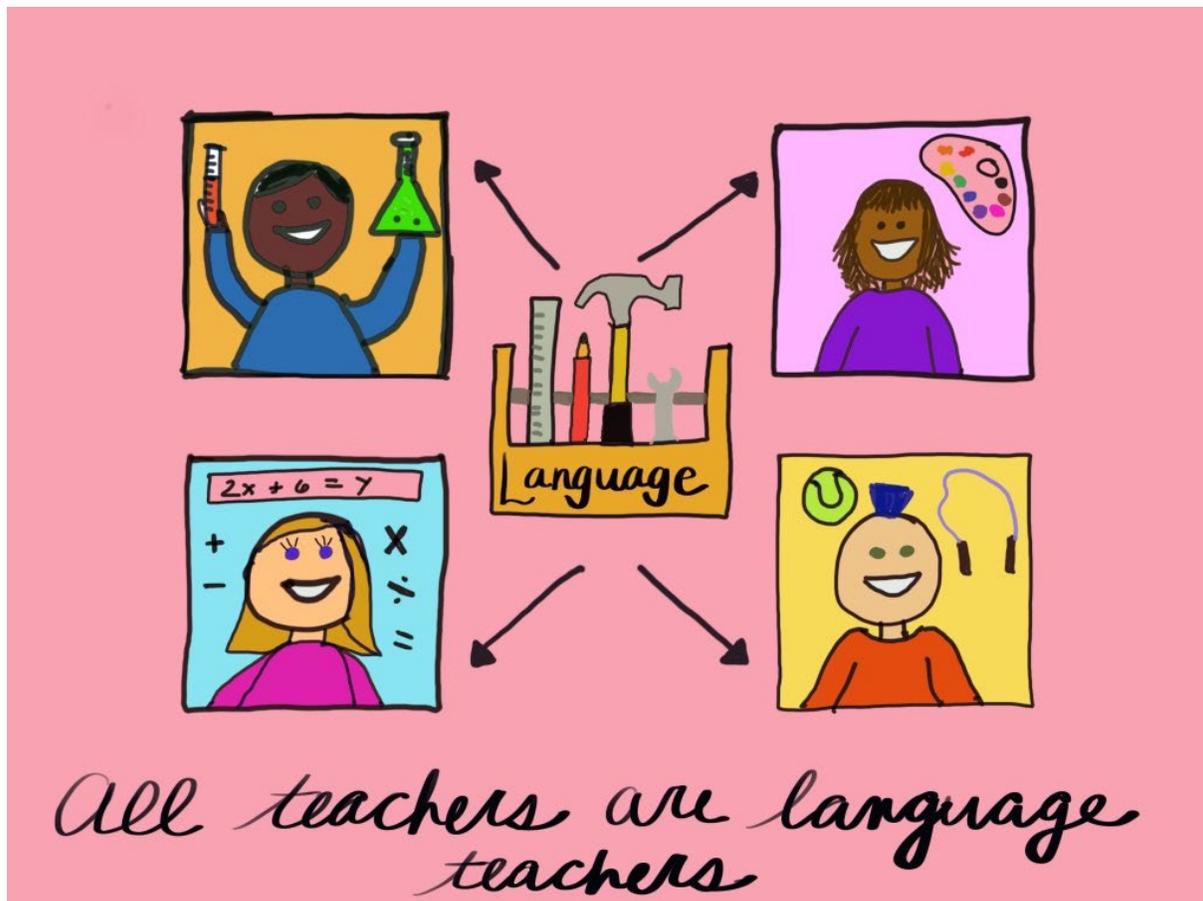
- the notion of 'every teacher is a language teacher'
- the importance of knowing the language ability of individual learners and why some learners may find writing tasks a particular challenge
- practical tips which teachers can use to help learners of all ability to develop their writing skills across the curriculum.



**Ready
for the
world**

“But I teach X, I don’t know
how to teach writing!”

Every teacher is a language teacher



- All teachers are experts of the language of their subject
- All teachers can help learners to develop transferable writing skills

The importance of knowing your learners

Who are the learners in your classrooms who find written work particularly challenging?

Why do they struggle?

The importance of knowing your learners

Hypermobility

Dysgraphia

ADHD

Dyslexia

Hearing impairment

ASC

OCD

Degenerative
visual impairment

Irlen Syndrome



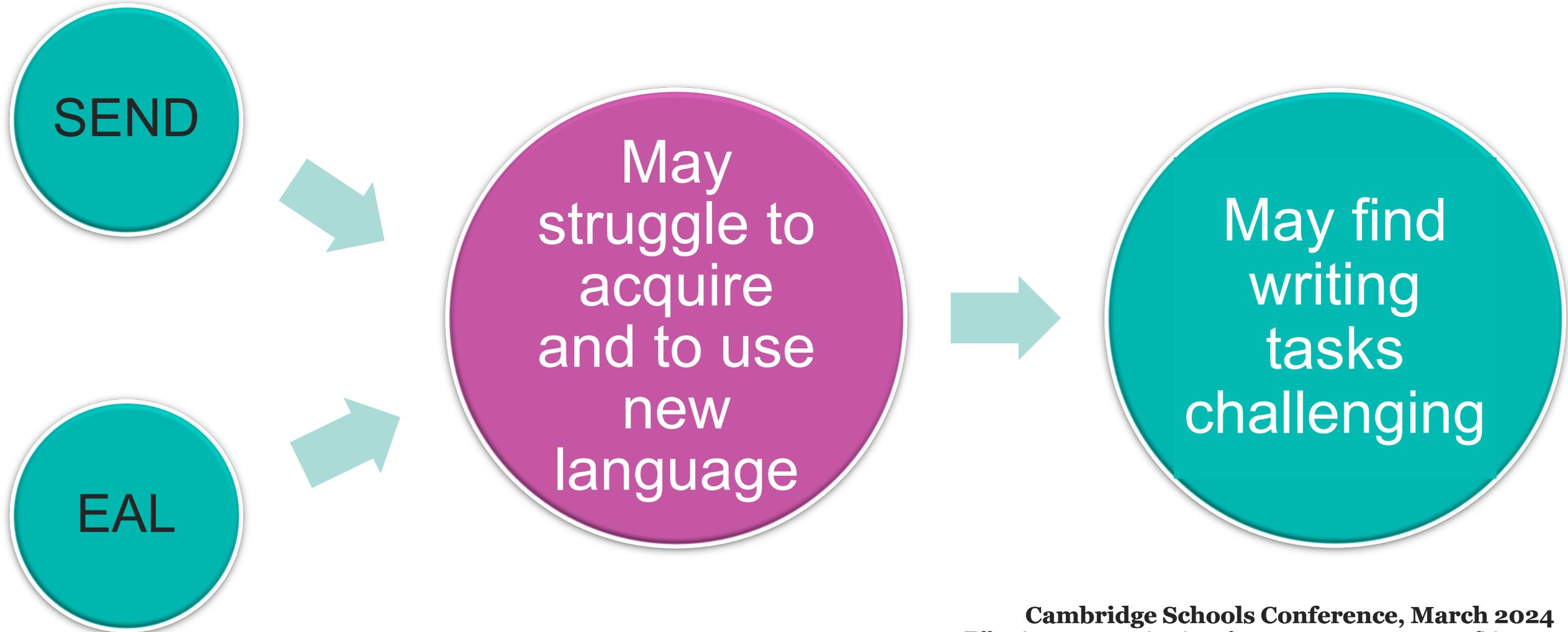
Manthan International School, Hyderabad

Generalised anxiety

EAL

Auditory processing disorder

The importance of knowing your learners

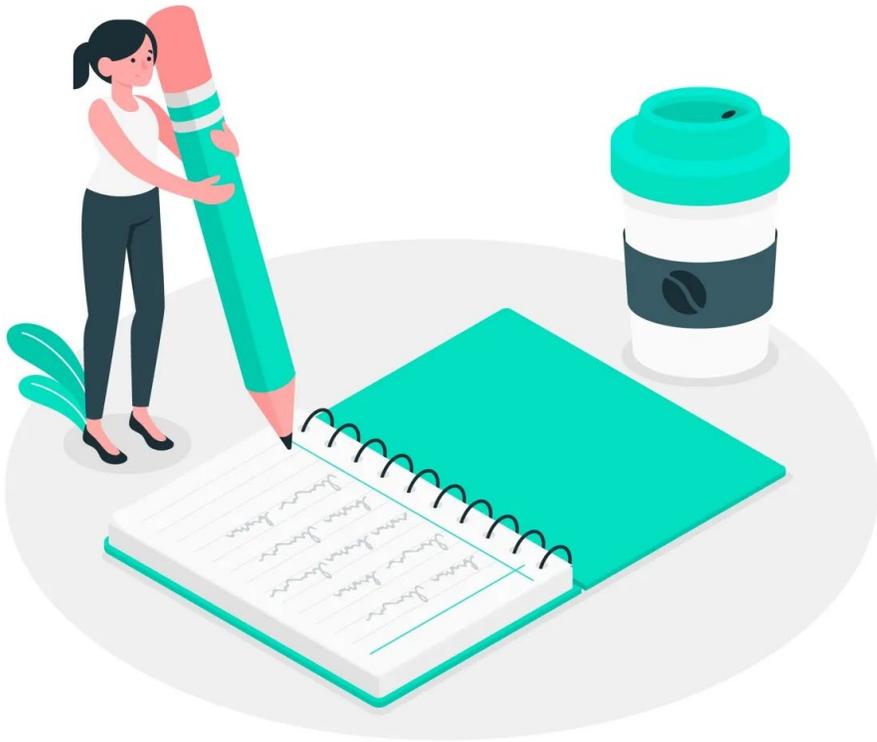


The importance of knowing your learners

Who in your classes might need support to understand and then use new language in their written work?

Who in your classes should be stretched and challenged to understand and use more complex language in their written work?

How to help learners of all ability develop their writing skills across the curriculum



1. Word level

2. Sentence/paragraph level

Support those
who struggle?

Stretch and
challenge the
more able

How to help learners of all ability develop their writing skills across the curriculum

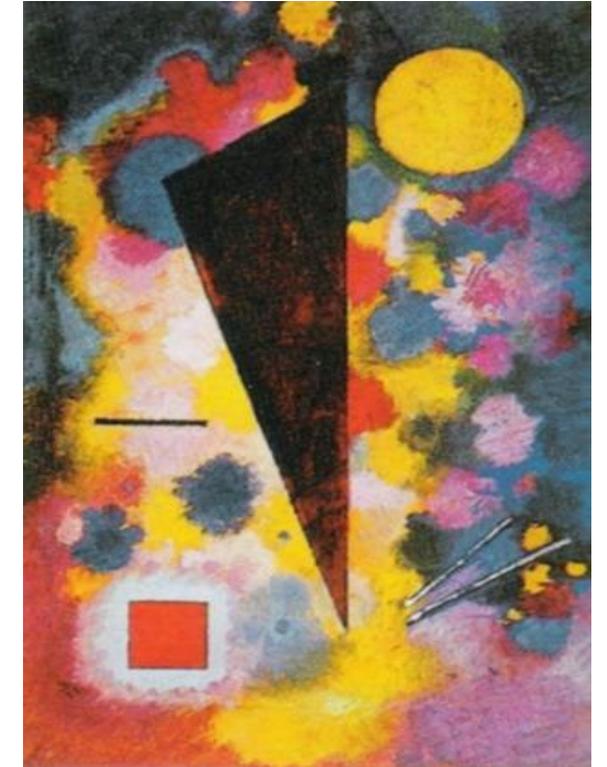
Word level considerations



White Zig-Zag, 1922



Composition VII, 1913



Resonance Multicolore, 1928

Referring closely to these examples, explain Kandinsky's artistic style.

Word level strategies

Crosswords

Wall displays

Vocabulary trees

Online vocab games

Graphic/visual vocab lists

Match cards

Multiple meanings

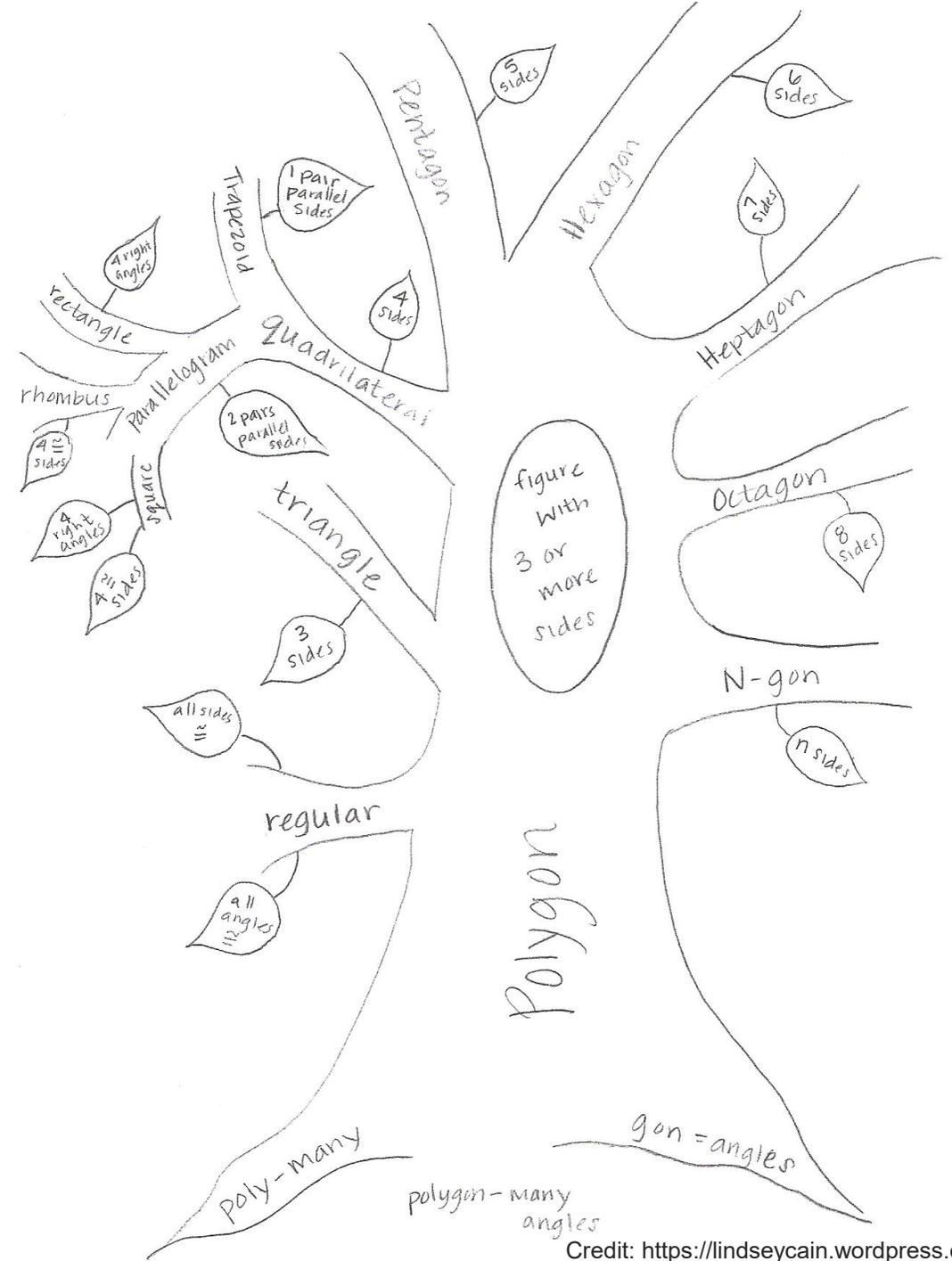
Wordsearches

'Flyswat'/slap the board

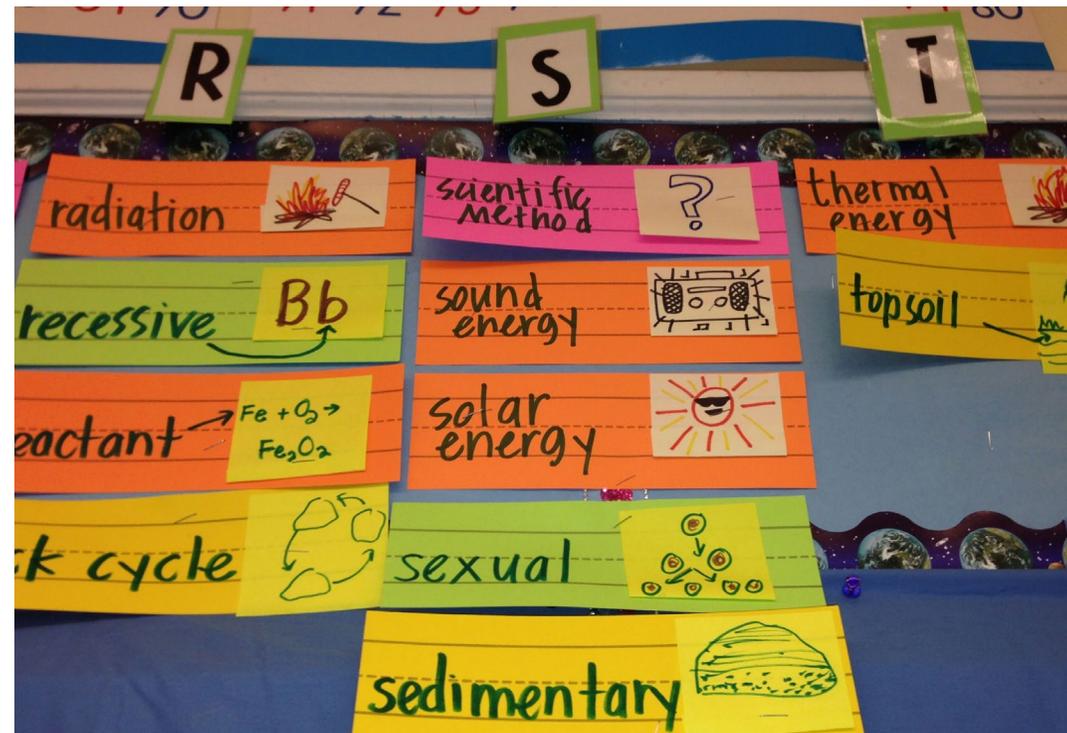
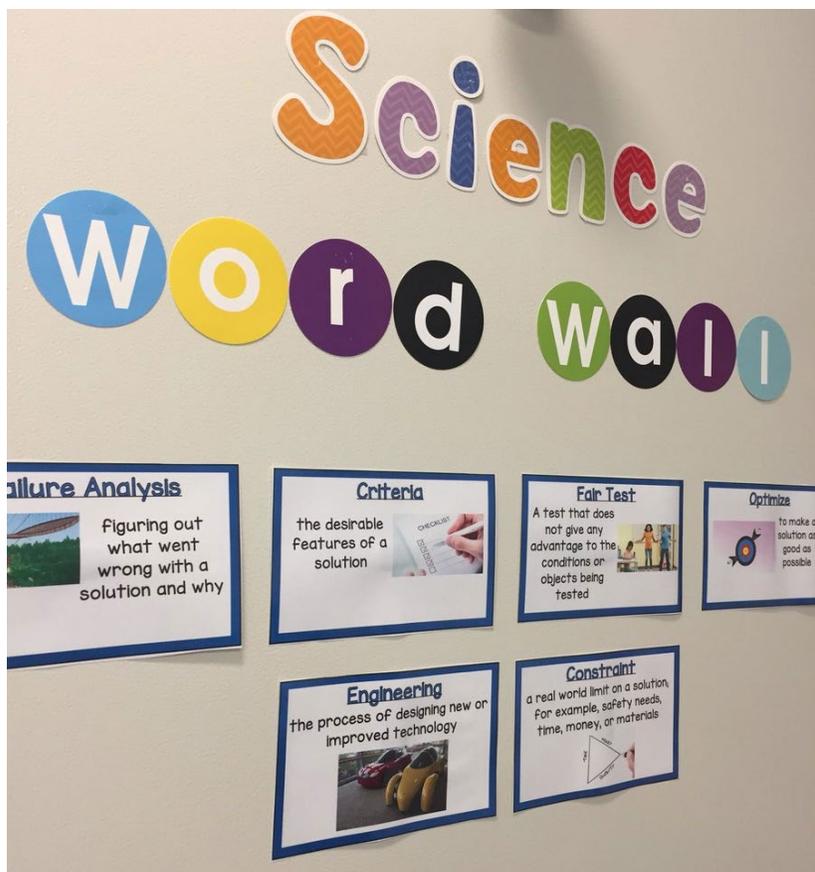
Vocab bingo

Word level strategy: Vocabulary trees

- Type of graphic organiser
 - **Trunk** – key term
 - **Roots** – the definition and root word
 - **Branches** – related words, ideas, examples
 - **Leaves** – definitions, key facts about the branched-out words



Word level strategy: Wall displays

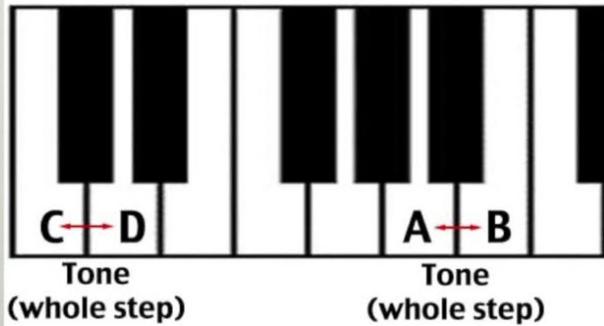


- Key verbs
- Complexity of vocabulary
- Command words and sentence starters
- Transferable academic vocabulary
- Parts of speech/grammatical function

Word level strategy: Exploring multiple meanings

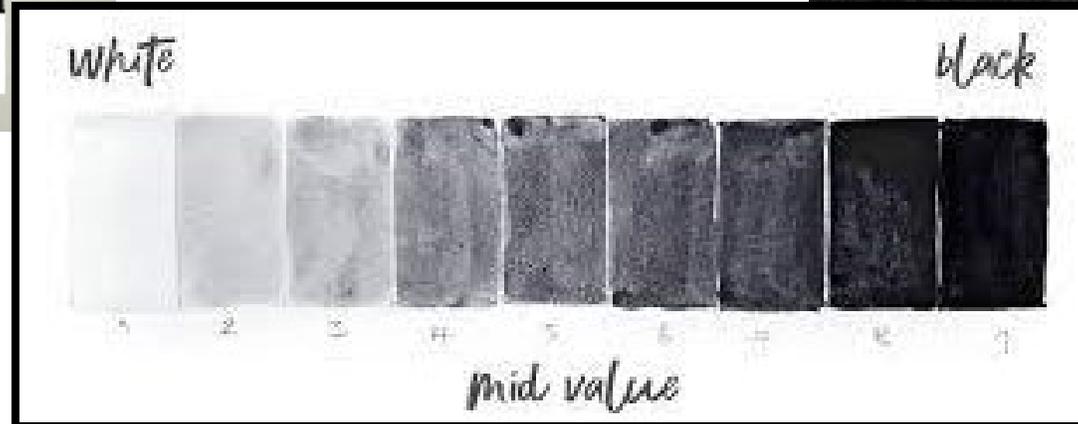
WHAT IS A TONE?

Tone - an interval of 2 semitones added together



Neutral

indifferent
matter-of-fact
mysterious
ironic
fanciful
nostalgic
detached



How to help learners of all ability develop their writing skills across the curriculum

Sentence/paragraph level considerations

William was a good leader. He won the Battle of Hastings. He was very brave and ambitious. He always tried hard.

William's strong leadership skills coupled with his immense courage, ambition and determination helped him to be victorious at the Battle of Hastings.

Sentence/paragraph level strategies

Verb phrases

Jumbled up responses

Cloze texts / gap fills

Sentence starters

Noun phrases

Paragraph frames

Exploiting model responses

Comparing responses

Clause combining

Improving responses

Sentence/paragraph level strategy: Encouraging the use of expanded noun phrases

- Greenhouse gases are increasing, mainly due to fossil fuels.

Concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are increasing, mainly due to the global use fossil fuels.

- Climate change must be tackled.

The ever-increasing problem of human-caused climate change must be tackled.

- Charles III, King of the United Kingdom since his mother's death in September 2022, is the oldest person to accede to the throne.
- Hippocrates, a leading physician from Ancient Greece, believed that the stars and planets had an impact on health.

Sentence/paragraph level strategy: Clause combining

There was a lack of scientific knowledge in medieval England. The causes of illness and disease remained a mystery.

1. There was a lack of scientific knowledge in medieval England **and** the causes of illness and disease remained a mystery.
2. There was a lack of scientific knowledge in medieval England **which meant that** the causes of illness and disease remained a mystery.
3. **Since** there was a lack of scientific knowledge in medieval England, the causes of illness and disease remained a mystery.

Sentence/paragraph level strategy: Modelling

“No matter what you teach, write in front of students. When I am teaching about formal introductory paragraphs, for instance, my history students think of a worthy historical question for me to tackle. With the projector on, I then write out the paragraph, sharing my thought process along the way. Students observe how I work and rework my prose, and how I place a premium on concision. They also critique my work, which in turn helps them not repeat similar mistakes. Admitting my weaknesses helps my students become less defensive about their own work, and in turn more open to criticism.”

Credit: David Cutler, Edutopia, George Lucas Foundation

Sentence/paragraph level strategy: Exploiting model responses

- Introduce transferable patterns of language
- Address common language related issues
- Examine the complexity of the vocabulary or phrases
- Showcase higher level grammatical structures
- Create a summary or reduce the text to key bullets, then rewrite it in your own words with language-related expectations for additional challenge
- Use as a source for many other written language development strategies

Key session take aways and final thoughts





CAMBRIDGE

Thank you!

Cambridge Schools Conference, March 2024
Effective communication: from competence to confidence