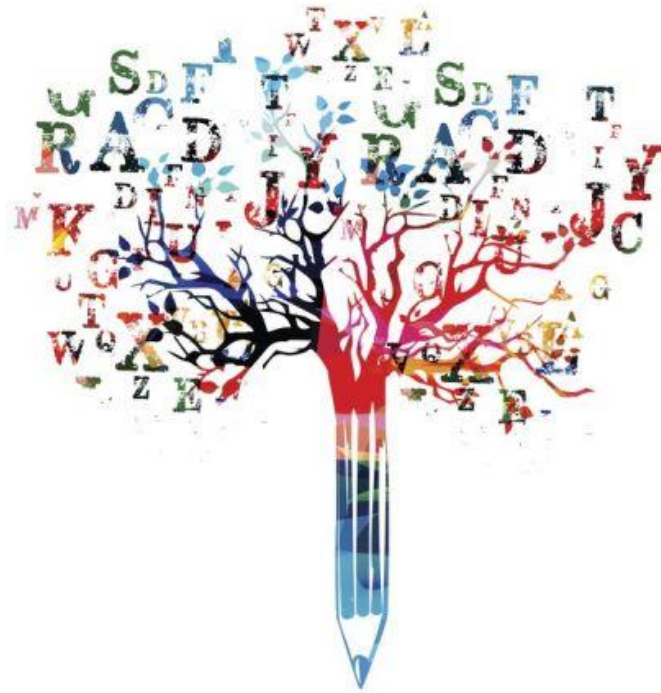


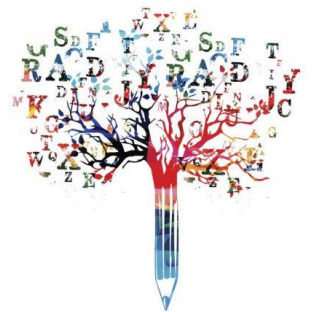
# Closing the Vocabulary Gap



# Closing the Vocabulary Gap

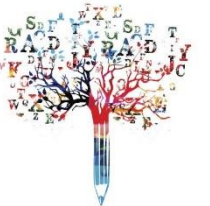
## Objectives:

- Understand what the 'vocabulary gap' is
- Understand the impact it has on our students
- Explore practical strategies to close the gap



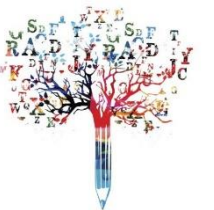
# What is the vocabulary gap?

- ‘Vocabulary’ refers to the amount of words we know.
- Accessing an academic curriculum in order to achieve requires a vocabulary of around 50,000 words.
- A study into linguistics in the home (Hart and Risley, 1990) showed that parents in middle families spoke on average 32 million more words to their children over a period of 48 months than parents in working class families.
- Gaps in the amount of words children know only get larger over time and mean that students struggle to express themselves, access an academic curriculum and therefore achieve social mobility.



# What impact does a limited vocabulary have on our students?

- What is the percentage of words you need to know in a text to ensure full comprehension?



Can you work out what process is being described?  
*75% of words are included here.*

\_\_\_\_\_ is marking a \_\_\_\_\_ on a measuring \_\_\_\_\_. This involves \_\_\_\_\_ the relationship between \_\_\_\_\_ of a measuring \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_, which must be \_\_\_\_\_. For example, placing a \_\_\_\_\_ in melting ice to see whether it reads zero to check it has been \_\_\_\_\_ correctly.



Can you work out what process is being described?  
*95% of words are included here.*

\_\_\_\_\_ is marking a scale on a measuring instrument. This involves establishing the relationship between indications of a measuring instrument and standard or reference values, which must be applied. For example, placing a thermometer in melting ice to see whether it reads zero to check it has been \_\_\_\_\_ correctly.



# What impact does a limited vocabulary have on our students?

- A poor vocabulary is the reason many of our students say they ‘don’t enjoy’ reading – and simply reading more with no guidance is the most effective way to expand a child’s vocabulary.
- It means students cannot access the whole curriculum, even if they are academically capable; for example, a student might have mathematical knowledge, but can’t access a GCSE paper due to the language used.
- It limits our students’ ability to express themselves – socially, creatively and emotionally – leading to frustration and poor behaviour.

# So what can we do about it?

- **Explicitly teach vocabulary.** Use back-of-book glossaries for new words and revisit these as a starter each lesson.
- **Make new vocabulary visible.** Every room has a wipe clean 'vocab' board – use it and refer to it when teaching new words.
- **Guided reading.** Keep word webs and Freyer diagrams handy in your tutor room to use when a student comes across a new word in their own book.
- **Become 'word detectives'.** Use root words, prefixes and suffixes to work out potential meanings of a word – useful for cross curricular vocab teaching.