

History

Vocabulary progression

Introduction to key vocabulary

This document outlines the vocabulary progression within our History curriculum.

It does not include **all** vocabulary that pupils will encounter in their History lessons, but rather focuses on the essential words and terms crucial for understanding the subject. These words are carefully selected to help students grasp important concepts and ideas central to the Kapow Primary History curriculum.

The vocabulary is categorised under four curriculum strands: **Chronological awareness**, **Substantive (abstract) concepts**, **Historical enquiry** and **Disciplinary concepts**. You may notice that **Topic knowledge** vocabulary does not appear on this document. This is because we have chosen to prioritise transferable historical vocabulary and focus on core curriculum goals. This approach encourages a deeper understanding of broad historical concepts rather than specific period details, and ensures adaptability across various topics. It enhances pupils' ability to apply critical thinking and analysis to diverse historical contexts.

Our aim in consolidating these key words is to enable teachers to focus their teaching on the vocabulary outlined for their year group, ensuring a strong understanding of what words pupils should already be familiar with and those they will encounter in future years.

‘What we call “knowledge” is language, and this fact proves that to understand any subject, we first need to understand its language’

Alex Quigley, Closing the Vocabulary Gap

Coming soon! Unit hubs are being updated for 24/25 to ensure the ‘Key vocabulary’ listed matches this document.

Receptive vs expressive vocabulary



Receptive vocabulary

The words a person understands when they hear or read them. Vocabulary that an individual can recognise and comprehend even if they do not actively use it in conversation or writing.



Expressive vocabulary

The words that a person can actively use in speech or writing to communicate.

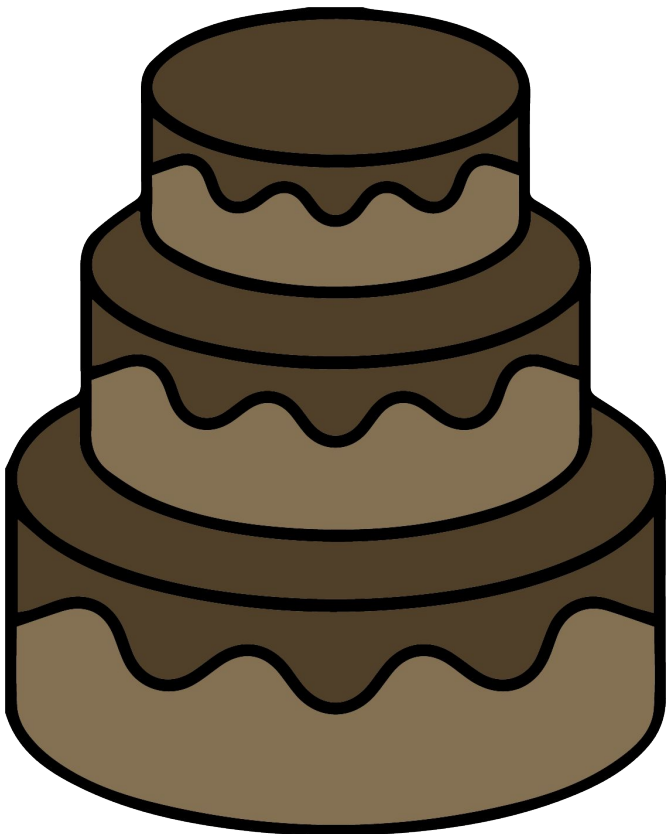
Some vocabulary will be used in lessons earlier than indicated in this document; this is done intentionally. Pupils often understand vocabulary receptively *before* they can confidently use it expressively. Our lesson plans guide teachers to model new vocabulary before the vocabulary is explicitly taught and before pupils are expected to use it to communicate ideas themselves..

The year groups listed represent when pupils are expected to retain the vocabulary and its meanings, and begin to actively use the words in appropriate contexts. We have chosen to focus on when vocabulary is used expressively, as this makes it easier for teachers to assess.

However, active use of new vocabulary does not necessarily imply complete mastery of each word or concept, as understanding continues to evolve and deepen over time.

Choosing words to teach

In selecting the words to include in this vocabulary progression, we have used the 'Three-tiers framework' (Beck, McKeown & Omanson, 1987) which advises focusing instruction on Tier 2 vocabulary for the most productive gains. Tier 1 words have not been included in the progression, unless they acquire a more specialised meaning (and would therefore be classed as Tier 2 or Tier 3 words) in the context of History. For example, words like 'power,' 'defend' and 'past' might be familiar to children in general contexts but have been included in our progression because it is important for children to understand their specific meanings in the context of History.



Tier 3 vocabulary

These words are used infrequently in conversation and often their use is subject-specific. Textbook glossaries usually focus on Tier 3 words as they can tend to be abstract in nature. They require explicit teaching and contextualisation.

Tier 2 vocabulary

These words are of high-utility as they are words which appear across the school curriculum and in written texts. Often explicit teaching of Tier 2 words is not planned for but this can be the most productive place to focus vocabulary instruction.

Tier 1 vocabulary

The most basic words. These are the words that typically appear in conversation, meaning children are exposed to them often from a very early age. They rarely require explicit teaching because they are already familiar to the majority of children.

Overview - Vocabulary progression

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Chronological awareness					
timeline past present future memory	(beyond) living memory (3) lifetime period history	sequence date Prehistory (3) AD (3) BC (3) age chronology	ancient modern era (3)	century (3)	decade (3)
Historical enquiry					
Disciplinary concepts					
similar different change (1) artefact	source	evidence primary source (3) secondary source (3) impact historian archaeology conclusion reconstruction (3)	interpret continuity compare point of view consequence deduction historically significant (3)	bias perspective cause effect propaganda (3)	legacy reliable historical enquiry (3)

*Words on this page are classified as Tier 2 words, unless stated otherwise.

Overview - Vocabulary progression

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Substantive (abstract) concepts						
Power (monarchy, government and Empire)	n/a	monarchy king (1) queen (1) power ruler	government empire emperor (3)	sovereign kingdom law	parliament democracy tyrant heir state	legislation (3) suffrage (3) politics
Achievements and follies of mankind	explorer	discovery inventor	legacy	technology achievement		advancement
Invasion, settlement and migration			settlement invasion expand conquer border	raid occupation/occupy territory decline		migration immigration emigration refugee (3) conflict alliance (3) evacuation
Civilisation (social and cultural)			civilisation leisure hygiene	master servant class childhood apprentice working conditions poorer wealthier poverty	citizen ethics enslaved (3) enslaver (3)	culture society traditions customs hierarchy occupation (noun - job) cultural exchange (3) peasant (3) noble (3)
Trade			trade export import barter	currency	trade route goods exchange merchant	tax
Beliefs			myth beliefs religion ceremony	sacred ritual creation gods/goddesses afterlife pope missionary convert monastery		
*Words on this page are classified as Tier 2 words, unless stated otherwise.						

Grammar notes

The vocabulary list includes words in various forms, as these are the versions most frequently used in our History lessons. For example, we might list 'trade' because it is commonly used in discussions. However, as pupils grow more confident with these specific forms, it is beneficial to teach them how to adapt and use all related forms of the word. For instance, from the root 'trade,' they should learn to use 'trader,' 'tradesman' and 'traded' with confidence. This approach ensures that pupils not only recognise these words but can also apply them accurately in different contexts.

Notes

We have classified the vocabulary in this document as Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3. Please note that classifying vocabulary can be subjective and challenging. Factors such as the age of the target audience and the context in which words are used may influence how familiar these words are considered.

References

Quigley, A., *Minding the Vocabulary Gap*, (Routledge, 2017), p. 95.
Beck, I., McKeown, M., & Kucan, L., *Bringing Words to Life*, (Guilford Press, 2013), p. 9.

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