

History

Vocabulary progression

Introduction to key vocabulary

This document outlines the vocabulary progression within Kapow's History curriculum.

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

The vocabulary is categorised under four curriculum strands: **Chronological awareness**, **Substantive (abstract) concepts**, **Historical enquiry** and **Disciplinary concepts**.

Topic knowledge vocabulary does not appear in this document because priority is given to transferable historical vocabulary. This approach encourages a deeper understanding of historical concepts and enables pupils to apply them in different contexts.

The aim in consolidating these keywords is to enable teachers to focus their teaching on the vocabulary outlined for each 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 and this is done intentionally. Pupils often understand vocabulary receptively before they can confidently use it expressively. 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. At times, the teacher may model the use of new words while pupils may use synonyms.

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. The focus is on when vocabulary is used expressively, making it easier for teachers to assess.

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, the 'three-tiers framework' (Beck, McKeown & Omanson, 1987) has been used, 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 take on a more specialised meaning (and would therefore be classed as tier 2 or tier 3 words) within the context of History. For example, words like 'power', 'defend' and 'past' might be familiar to children in everyday use but are included in the progression because understanding their specific meanings in the context of History is important.



Tier 3 vocabulary

These words are used infrequently in conversation and their use is often 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 high-utility as they 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, which typically appear in conversation and are frequently encountered by pupils from an early age. They rarely require explicit teaching because they are already familiar to most pupils.

Overview - Vocabulary progression

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

*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	king (1) monarchy power queen (1) ruler	emperor (3) empire government	law kingdom sovereign	heir democracy parliament state tyrant	legislation (3) politics suffrage (3)
Achievements and follies of mankind	explorer	discovery inventor	legacy	achievement technology		advancement
Invasion, settlement and migration			border conquer expand invasion settlement	decline occupation/occupy territory	raid	alliance (3) conflict emigration evacuation immigration migration refugee (3)
Civilisation (social and cultural)			civilisation hygiene leisure	apprentice childhood class master poorer poverty servant wealthier working conditions	citizen enslaved (3) enslaver (3) ethics	cultural exchange (3) culture customs hierarchy noble (3) occupation peasant (3) society traditions
Trade			trade export import barter	currency	exchange goods merchant trade route	tax
Beliefs			beliefs ceremony myth religion	afterlife convert creation gods/goddesses missionary monastery pope ritual sacred		

*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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