

## 20 Tools for Teaching Vocabulary

If you've read my posts about [building vocabulary](#) and [spelling in a reading rich curriculum](#), you'll know that I am keen on instilling a love of reading, an interest in the etymology of words and an inquisitive nature about word origins and meanings. I believe the teaching of spelling and vocabulary should be through fun, engaging activities that excite and inspire children.

In no particular order, here's my run-down of my top 20 online tools for teaching vocab:

- 1 [Vocabulary Ninja](#) is a fantastic website full of useful resources, word banks and games. I particularly like the [100 overused words and their alternatives](#) document and the Vocab Lab App for iPads.
- 2 [Describing Words](#) is a brilliant online tool to help expand vocabulary and expose children to more adventurous words. They simply type in the noun they want to describe (e.g. teacher) and the website will generate a whole host of possible adjectives.
- 3 [Word Hippo](#) is a fantastic vocabulary tool that allows the user to explore synonyms, antonyms, meanings, rhyming words, the word in context (sentences) and audio pronunciations.
- 4 [vocabulary.co.li](#) is one of my favourite vocabulary websites. It offers hundreds of amazing games and activities for building and teaching vocabulary.
- 5 [The Verbivore Teacher's Vocabulary Vault](#) is an incredible resource with a treasure trove of categorised word banks including teaching plans, lesson resources and 'words for the fridge' at home. It also has some excellent free resources to support the explicit vocabulary teaching of greek and latin root words.
- 6 [Vocabulary.com](#) is free and easy to join. This website has multiple uses, from online dictionary, to emoji explanations, vocab resources and word quizzes. One of the most impressive features for teachers is that you can create lists of words for different topics and assign prep, quizzes and tasks based on these words. If you sign up to the newsletter, they'll also send you the 'Word of the Day'.
- 7 [Visuwords.com](#) is self-explanatory: it creates interesting graphic visuals and word webs for your chosen word.
- 8 [Online Etymology Dictionary](#) is a fantastic website for instilling that inquisitive nature in children. The etymology of words is fascinating and, with a quick search, you can gain word origins and histories in a matter of seconds. It gives dates beside a word which indicates the earliest year for which there is a surviving written record of that word.
- 9 [Word Sift](#) is another great web tool that can help children to visualise vocabulary. From word-clouds, to connecting key words, this website has lots of potential for the classroom.

- 10 [Mini MatrixMaker](#) is a great tool for encouraging children to consider how words are 'built'. They can explore the number of prefixes and suffixes through 'word sums' (e.g. for the word joy, a word sum could be joy + ful). From there, building an accurate, attractive matrix is all done for them, producing a word 'Mini-Matrix'.
- 11 [Word Microscope](#) is incredible for examining words. You can download and install it for free and it helps children to unpick the spelling of words (including prefixes and suffixes) and presents the microscope findings in an easily digestible visual format.
- 12 [WordStudySpelling.com](#) is a great website where you'll find word study spelling ideas and resources, with year-group specific planning, word sorts and challenge/extend activities.
- 13 [Literacy Wagoll](#) has a bank of example texts for setting descriptions, which can be explored by children seeking new and exciting words.
- 14 [Pobble.com](#) is also incredibly useful for encouraging children to think about vocabulary choice, as it is a library of written work by children. You can search for written work by topic and year group so that the language is both age *and* content appropriate.
- 15 [Lexipedia](#) is an online, visual, and interactive thesaurus program that displays synonyms as a word web.
- 16 [Word Searcher](#) is great for exploring word families and words which have the same spelling, prefix or suffix. Simply type in your 'sound' (e.g. *tion*) and it generates a list of words with the same phrase. Brilliant for exploring rules for spelling and creating word webs.
- 17 [Snappy Words](#) is an online dictionary and thesaurus that helps children find the meanings of words as well as connections to associated words.
- 18 [Graphwords](#) is similar to Snappy Words but it's a thesaurus that helps you find the meanings of words and show connections among associated words in a visual word web.
- 19 [Word Spy](#) is 'the word lover's guide to new words'. It helpfully explains the meaning of new words and phrases with new entries added regularly so you can stay up to speed.
- 20 [Free Rice](#) is a fun word matching game where pupils can match vocabulary words to the correct definition. For every correct answer you choose, 10 grains of rice are raised to help end world hunger through the World Food Programme.