

Ideas for teaching mathematical vocabulary

Step 1. Explicit instruction

Pupils may naturally acquire new vocabulary through learning experiences. However, these experiences are not sufficient for many children. This is why the key first step in language teaching is explicit instruction. The new terminology needs to be introduced and explored in various ways by providing hands-on experiences if possible.

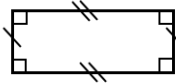
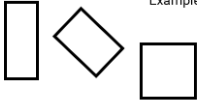
The second stage allows children to restate in their own words and connect it to their existing schema. This can be achieved in different ways. Such as:

- allowing pupils to rephrase it for someone else to understand. For examples, a younger child, a parent or the headteacher
- combining pictures, symbols and words using 'Frayer' type models can be helpful, similar to those shown below.

What does it mean?	Facts/Characteristics
WORD	
Examples	Non-Examples

What does it mean? <i>A special number which is has only two factors.</i>	Facts/Characteristics <i>It is only divisible by itself and 1. 2 is the only even prime number.</i>
WORD Prime number	
Examples <i>2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23...</i>	Non-Examples <i>0 and 1 are not prime numbers. 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22</i>

Where do you see this word in everyday life?	Mathematical symbols (if there are any)
WORD	
What does your word or phrase mean?	Examples
What other mathematical words is it related to?	Non-Examples

Where do you see this word in everyday life? <i>On the face of boxes, computer screens, door frames, tables</i>	Mathematical symbols (if there are any) 
WORD rectangle	
What does your word or phrase mean? <i>A 4 sided polygon with 4 right angles. Internal angles total 360°</i>	Examples 
What other mathematical words is it related to? <i>Two dimensional, right angles, length, width, parallel lines, perpendicular lines, square</i>	Non-Examples 