SS Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School

Reading Spine Vocabulary Progression

Explicit vocabulary for teacher modelling and book talk · Year 1 to Year 6 · 2026–27

Teaching principle: Select a small number of words for explicit teaching, revisit them in context and model them orally. Vocabulary should be taken directly from the text being read and checked against the school's edition before teaching.

Suggested routine: Hear it in context → explain it simply → say it together → explore synonyms/antonyms or morphology where useful → revisit it during reading → expect it in pupil talk and writing.

Year 1

Half term	Reading spine text	Suggested explicit vocabulary	Modelled rich-language sentence
Aut 1	The Gruffalo	creature, terrible, poisonous, feast, knobbly, underground, stroll, tusks	The creature has terrible tusks.
Aut 2	Last Stop on Market Street	neighbourhood, journey, destination, gratitude, beauty, community, familiar, appreciate	CJ begins to appreciate the beauty and kindness within his community.
Aut 2	Christmas stories	celebration, tradition, generosity, anticipation, gathering, joyful, kindness, festive	The family gathers together to celebrate a special tradition.
Spr 1	Beegu	unfamiliar, lonely, curious, peculiar, welcome, communicate, belong, comfort	Beegu feels lonely in an unfamiliar place but longs to belong.
Spr 1	Look Up!	astronomer, meteor, observe, spectacular, distracted, wonder, discover, universe	The children observe the spectacular sky with a sense of wonder.
Spr 1	Astro Girl	astronaut, mission, orbit, gravity, explore, determined, ambitious, achievement	Astrid is determined to explore space and become an astronaut.
Spr 2	Billy and the Beast	courageous, enormous, capture, rescue, ingredients, cunning, determined, defeat	Billy is courageous and determined when she plans the rescue.
Spr 2	Florence Nightingale	nurse, patient, hospital, hygiene, sanitation, improve, dedicated, pioneer	Florence was dedicated to improving hygiene and care for patients.
Spr 2	Hoorah for Mary Seacole	nurse, healer, courageous, journey, battlefield, medicine, determined, compassion	Mary showed compassion and courage while caring for wounded soldiers.
Sum 1	The Extraordinary Gardener	extraordinary, imagination, nurture, blossom, transform, flourish, environment, community	By nurturing the plants, Joe transforms his environment.
Sum 1	Jack and the Beanstalk	enormous, towering, mysterious, fortune, cautious, greedy, courageous, escape	Jack climbs the towering beanstalk into a mysterious world.
Sum 1	Broad Bean (Life Cycles)	seed, germinate, root, shoot, seedling, mature, pod, life cycle	The seed germinates before a shoot appears above the soil.
Sum 2	The Sea Saw	treasured, separated, journey, drifting, determined, reunited, belonging, comfort	The treasured toy makes a determined journey to be reunited with its owner.
Sum 2	Tiddler	imagination, tale, exaggerate, adventure, storyteller, believe, rescue, remarkable	Tiddler tells remarkable tales that stretch the truth.

Year 2

Half term	Reading spine text	Suggested explicit vocabulary	Modelled rich-language sentence
Aut 1	The Three Little Pigs	sturdy, fragile, construct, cunning, determined, devour, collapse, shelter	A sturdy shelter is constructed to withstand danger.
Aut 1	Wolves	predator, prey, habitat, carnivore, characteristics, suspicious, threatening, unsuspecting	The wolf is a predator whose behaviour appears increasingly threatening.
Aut 2	The Emperor's Egg	Antarctic, colony, huddle, incubation, harsh, survive, shelter, responsibility	The colony huddles together to survive the harsh Antarctic conditions.
Aut 2	Endangered animal texts	endangered, extinct, species, habitat, threat, conservation, protect, population	Conservation can protect an endangered species and its habitat.
Aut 2	The Search for the Giant Arctic Jellyfish	expedition, Arctic, elusive, discovery, explorer, navigate, perseverance, specimen	The explorers persevere with their Arctic expedition in search of an elusive creature.
Spr 1	We Are Water Protectors	sacred, protect, precious, pollution, threatened, responsibility, environment, generations	The community has a responsibility to protect precious water for future generations.
Spr 1	Dear Earth	planet, precious, wonder, habitat, ocean, climate, protect, responsibility	The text celebrates the wonder of our planet and our responsibility to protect it.
Spr 2	The Magic Paintbrush	magical, emperor, greed, generous, poverty, demand, fortunate, justice	The emperor's greed contrasts with the girl's generosity.
Spr 2	Zeraffa Giraffa	journey, extraordinary, exotic, spectacle, voyage, remarkable, crowd, curiosity	The remarkable giraffe becomes a spectacle during her long journey.
Spr 2	The Journey Home	habitat, threatened, destruction, journey, refuge, environment, endangered, survival	The animals seek refuge because their habitats are threatened.
Sum 1	The Great Fire - A City in Flames	inferno, engulfed, devastating, evacuate, destruction, spread, combustible, eyewitness	Flames engulfed the buildings and caused devastating destruction.
Sum 1	The Great Fire of London	bakery, flames, timber, spread, extinguish, evacuate, diary, eyewitness	An eyewitness account helps us understand how rapidly the fire spread.
Sum 1	Flying Free: Bessie Coleman	aviator, pioneer, ambition, discrimination, determined, achievement, courage, opportunity	Bessie was a pioneering aviator who challenged discrimination.
Sum 1	The Sound Collector	soundscape, echo, rustle, clatter, whisper, rhythm, repetition, onomatopoeia	The poet collects a soundscape of whispers, clatters and echoes.
Sum 2	The Lion King	kingdom, heir, responsibility, betrayal, exile, courage, loyalty, destiny	Simba learns that leadership brings responsibility as well as privilege.
Sum 2	Lila and the Secret of Rain	drought, parched, harvest, desperate, tradition, hope, rainfall, community	The parched land leaves the community desperate for rainfall.
Sum 2	Let's Explore Kenya	continent, equator, landscape, climate, wildlife, culture, settlement, savannah	Kenya has varied landscapes, wildlife and cultural traditions.

Year 3

Half term	Reading spine text	Suggested explicit vocabulary	Modelled rich-language sentence
Aut 1	Skara Brae	prehistoric, settlement, archaeologist, excavation, artefact, dwelling, preserved, evidence	Preserved artefacts provide evidence about the prehistoric settlement.
Aut 1	Stone Age Boy	prehistoric, hunter-gatherer, settlement, survival, forage, shelter, resourceful, artefact	Hunter-gatherers had to be resourceful to survive.
Aut 1	The First Drawing	ancestor, charcoal, observe, depict, imagination, communicate, prehistoric, expression	The child uses charcoal to depict what he has observed.

Aut 2	Cinderella of the Nile	ancient, merchant, servant, pharaoh, captivity, fortune, civilisation, destiny	Her destiny changes after a series of unexpected events.
Aut 2	The Story of Tutankhamun	pharaoh, dynasty, tomb, sarcophagus, archaeologist, excavation, artefact, discovery	The excavation revealed remarkable artefacts from the pharaoh's tomb.
Aut 2	There's a Pharaoh in Your Bath	pharaoh, ancient, bewildered, peculiar, disguise, commotion, historical, humorous	The author creates humour by placing an ancient pharaoh in a modern setting.
Spr 1	The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane	miraculous, vain, devotion, despair, compassion, transformation, loss, redemption	Edward's experiences transform him from vain to compassionate.
Spr 1	The Lighthouse	isolated, treacherous, turbulent, beacon, ominous, desperate, rescue, suspense	The ominous setting creates suspense around the isolated lighthouse.
Spr 2	Earth-Shattering Events	tectonic, magnitude, eruption, seismic, devastation, catastrophic, epicentre, evacuation	Seismic activity can cause catastrophic damage near the epicentre.
Spr 2	The Street Beneath My Feet	layer, surface, foundation, sediment, fossil, subterranean, geology, infrastructure	Beneath the surface are layers of rock, fossils and human infrastructure.
Spr 2	Pebble in My Pocket	erosion, sediment, weathering, formation, ancient, transform, landscape, geological	Weathering and erosion gradually transform the landscape.
Spr 2	Volcanoes and Earthquakes	magma, lava, tectonic, fault, eruption, tremor, seismic, dormant	Tectonic movement can trigger a tremor or volcanic eruption.
Sum 1	The Journal of Iliona	enslaved, liberty, injustice, oppression, resistance, civilisation, perspective, privilege	The journal offers a personal perspective on oppression and injustice.
Sum 1	Escape from Pompeii	eruption, tremor, debris, suffocating, molten, panic, devastation, flee	The inhabitants flee as debris and ash fill the air.
Sum 2	The Wolves in the Walls	uneasy, lurking, peculiar, imagination, intruder, chaos, suspicion, courage	A sense of unease grows as Lucy suspects something is lurking.
Sum 2	Leon and the Place Between	mysterious, illusion, spectacle, mesmerised, extraordinary, vanish, enchanted, anticipation	Leon is mesmerised by the mysterious spectacle.
Sum 2	George's Marvellous Medicine	concoction, ingredients, peculiar, enormous, mischievous, consequence, transform, astonished	George creates a peculiar concoction with astonishing consequences.
Spr 2	Haiku, Tanka and Acrostic poetry	syllable, line, imagery, concise, structure, pattern, observation, atmosphere	Concise imagery can create a vivid atmosphere in only a few lines.

Year 4

Half term	Reading spine text	Suggested explicit vocabulary	Modelled rich-language sentence
Aut 1	Beowulf	warrior, heroic, monstrous, vengeance, courage, honour, legendary, triumph	The legendary warrior seeks honour through courageous deeds.
Aut 2	The Rabbits	colonisation, invasion, displacement, indigenous, exploitation, destruction, oppression, consequence	The text explores the consequences of colonisation and displacement.
Aut 2	The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	enchanted, prophecy, betrayal, temptation, sacrifice, allegiance, tyranny, redemption	The prophecy offers hope against tyranny, while betrayal brings serious consequences.
Spr 1	Arthur and the Golden Rope	quest, legendary, mythical, courageous, perilous, determination, heroic, triumph	Arthur undertakes a perilous quest that tests his determination.
Spr 1	Shackleton's Journey	expedition, endurance, treacherous, navigation, perseverance, stranded, survival, leadership	Shackleton's leadership and perseverance are tested in treacherous conditions.
Spr 2	The Iron Man	colossal, mysterious, devour, destruction, compassion, sacrifice, conflict,	Conflict gives way to reconciliation when compassion replaces fear.

		reconciliation	
Sum 1	Charlotte's Web	friendship, loyalty, mortality, compassion, injustice, sacrifice, humble, miraculous	Charlotte's loyalty and sacrifice reveal the depth of her friendship.
Sum 2	Cloud Tea Monkeys	plantation, harvest, poverty, compassion, precious, delicate, generosity, livelihood	The family's livelihood depends upon the delicate tea harvest.
Sum 2	The Great Kapok Tree	rainforest, ecosystem, deforestation, interdependence, habitat, conservation, destruction, persuade	The creatures persuade the man to recognise the interdependence of the rainforest.
Sum 2	The Giving Tree	generosity, selfless, sacrifice, gratitude, relationship, giving, consequence, interpretation	The story invites different interpretations of generosity and sacrifice.

Year 5

Half term	Reading spine text	Suggested explicit vocabulary	Modelled rich-language sentence
Aut 1	Cinquains	syllable, concise, imagery, structure, line, precision, rhythm, noun	A cinquain uses a concise structure to create precise imagery.
Aut 1	Kensuke's Kingdom	isolated, marooned, survival, resourceful, hostility, companionship, reconciliation, sanctuary	The island changes from a place of isolation into a sanctuary.
Aut 2	Children of the Benin Kingdom	kingdom, civilisation, dynasty, trade, craftsmanship, heritage, invasion, resistance	The text reveals the sophisticated civilisation and craftsmanship of Benin.
Spr 1	Macbeth	ambition, prophecy, treachery, tyranny, conscience, guilt, deception, consequence	Unchecked ambition and deception lead to devastating consequences.
Spr 1	Sir Francis Drake / Tudor non-fiction	exploration, privateer, empire, voyage, navigation, perspective, legacy, controversy	Historical perspectives can shape how we interpret a person's legacy.
Spr 2	The Highwayman	highwayman, ostler, moor, casement, torrent, betrayal, sacrifice, vengeance	The poem combines betrayal and sacrifice to create a tragic narrative.
Spr 2	The Malfeasance	malfeasance, wrongdoing, suspicion, evidence, accusation, motive, consequence, justice	The language of suspicion and accusation creates tension around the alleged wrongdoing.
Sum 1	Hidden Figures	segregation, discrimination, equality, pioneering, perseverance, mathematician, prejudice, achievement	The women overcome prejudice and discrimination through expertise and perseverance.
Sum 1	One Small Step	aspiration, determination, achievement, obstacle, perseverance, ambition, sacrifice, perspective	The narrative explores the perseverance needed to pursue an ambitious goal.
Sum 1	Chasing Space	astronaut, orbit, engineering, perseverance, mission, achievement, opportunity, representation	Leland Melvin's journey shows how opportunity and perseverance can shape achievement.
Sum 1	Women in Science	pioneering, innovation, discovery, discrimination, contribution, achievement, scientist, legacy	Pioneering women made significant scientific contributions despite discrimination.
Sum 2	Titanic film narrative / non-fiction	liner, voyage, passenger, collision, evacuation, catastrophe, survivor, testimony	Survivor testimony helps us understand the human impact of the catastrophe.
Sum 2	Kaspar, Prince of Cats	voyage, aristocracy, catastrophe, class, companion, survival, privilege, destiny	The voyage exposes contrasts in class and privilege.
Sum 2	Victorian non-fiction	industrialisation, poverty, reform, workhouse, sanitation, class, labour, inequality	Reformers challenged harsh conditions and social inequality in Victorian Britain.

Year 6

Half term	Reading spine text	Suggested explicit vocabulary	Modelled rich-language sentence
Aut 1	The Odyssey	epic, voyage, mortal, immortal, cunning, temptation, vengeance, endurance, fate	Odysseus relies on cunning and endurance as he confronts fate and temptation.
Aut 2	High Rise Mystery	investigate, evidence, motive, suspect, alibi, deduction, suspicious, revelation	The detectives test each suspect's alibi against the available evidence.
Spr 1	Rose Blanche	persecution, propaganda, oppression, innocence, compassion, resistance, injustice, liberation	Rose's compassion grows as she witnesses persecution and injustice.
Spr 1	Anne Frank	persecution, antisemitism, occupation, concealment, discrimination, oppression, resilience, testimony	Anne's testimony gives a personal perspective on persecution under occupation.
Spr 2	Floodland	dystopian, submerged, desolate, scarce, displacement, survival, civilisation, isolation	The dystopian setting presents a submerged world where resources are scarce.
Spr 2	Romeo and Juliet	feud, conflict, devotion, impulsive, fate, tragedy, reconciliation, consequence	The long-standing feud drives conflict and contributes to the tragedy.
Sum 1	Windrush Child	migration, identity, heritage, discrimination, belonging, citizenship, injustice, resilience	The text explores how migration and discrimination affect identity and belonging.
Sum 1	Windrush Child - poem	migration, heritage, displacement, voice, identity, memory, belonging, injustice	The poetic voice connects migration with memory, identity and belonging.
Sum 1	On the Move: Poems about Migration	migration, refugee, displacement, journey, sanctuary, identity, belonging, perspective	The poems present varied perspectives on displacement, journeys and sanctuary.
Sum 1	Windrush non-fiction	generation, migration, citizenship, discrimination, scandal, injustice, contribution, legacy	The Windrush Generation made lasting contributions while also experiencing injustice.
Sum 2	The Arrival	migration, displacement, alienation, assimilation, unfamiliar, sanctuary, belonging, identity	The unfamiliar setting conveys the alienation experienced by a new arrival.
Sum 2	End-of-year production script	dialogue, stage direction, cue, scene, characterisation, projection, expression, ensemble	Stage directions and dialogue support characterisation and performance.