

Strengthen vocabulary knowledge

A suggestion for implementing the strategy
'Supporting literacy and numeracy in NCEA'
from the Guide: [Dyslexia and learning](#)

-
- Includes:**
- Provide lots of repetition
 - Build vocabulary knowledge
 - Use word clusters
 - Build a word wall
 - Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Dyslexia and learning](#)

Strategy: [Supporting literacy and numeracy in NCEA](#)

Suggestion: [Strengthen vocabulary knowledge](#)

Date

26 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/dyslexia-and-learning/strengthen-vocabulary-knowledge

Provide lots of repetition

Offer multiple opportunities for ākonga to clarify their ideas and practice using new vocabulary.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/97295513>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Ministry of Education \(NZ\)](#)

<https://vimeo.com/educationnz>

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Build vocabulary knowledge

Supporting recognition of new vocabulary means ākonga can focus more on comprehension instead of decoding.

The [literacy pedagogy guides](#) contain useful links for building vocabulary in each subject area.

- ✓ Determine the words that might be challenging, before lessons.
- ✓ Co-construct lists of topic specific vocabulary with ākonga, and revisit often.
- ✓ Support ākonga to identify root words, prefixes and suffixes and build knowledge of their meanings. Point out patterns in the pronunciation and spelling of prefixes, suffixes, and vowels in selected words (e.g. rac-ism, sex-ism, age-ism).
- ✓ Help ākonga link new words to existing knowledge (simpler synonyms they already know) and give opportunities to reinforce learning with meaningful communication.
- ✓ Develop strategies to understand unfamiliar language (e.g. word families). Point out similarities and differences among words that belong to word families (e.g. define, definitely, definition).
- ✓ Provide opportunities for ākonga to practice using new words to reinforce correct pronunciation and usage.
- ✓ Ask open-ended questions that require ākonga to respond using the new words (e.g. Do you think racism, sexism, or ageism is more prevalent in our society? Why?).

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Use word clusters

In this science class, ākongā see, say, and organise words into clusters while discussing their meaning with their peers.

Connecting the written word with the spoken word is helpful for word recognition and spelling.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/97295510>

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Source:

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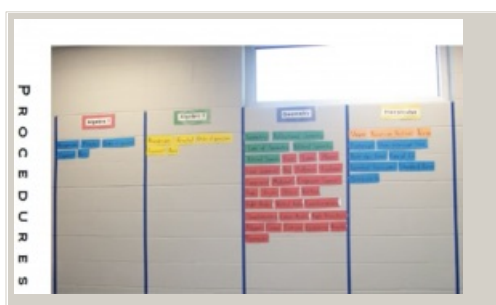
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Build a word wall

Keep new vocabulary visible, organise words into groups to support decoding (see [academic wordlists](#)) and illustrate where possible.

Word walls: A support for literacy in secondary school classrooms

includes useful approaches for all subject areas.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/wovN8Y9KbGo>

No captions or transcript

Source:

[Khalid Smith \(US\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/user/LessonCast>

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Useful resources



How can instruction help adolescent students with vocabulary?

Read time: 10 min

Research-based strategies for teaching difficult vocabulary to adolescent learners.

Publisher: All About Adolescent Literacy

[Visit website](#)



Reading instruction: Vocabulary

Read time: 6 min

Classroom strategies for adolescent learners explained.

Publisher: All About Adolescent Literacy

[Visit website](#)



Wordwall

Wordwall is a fun way for learners to learn new vocabulary through quizzes and other fun online activities.

Publisher: WordWall

[Visit website](#)

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