

# Every teacher is a language teacher


How all teachers can help all learners develop their writing skills

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# Today, we will explore:

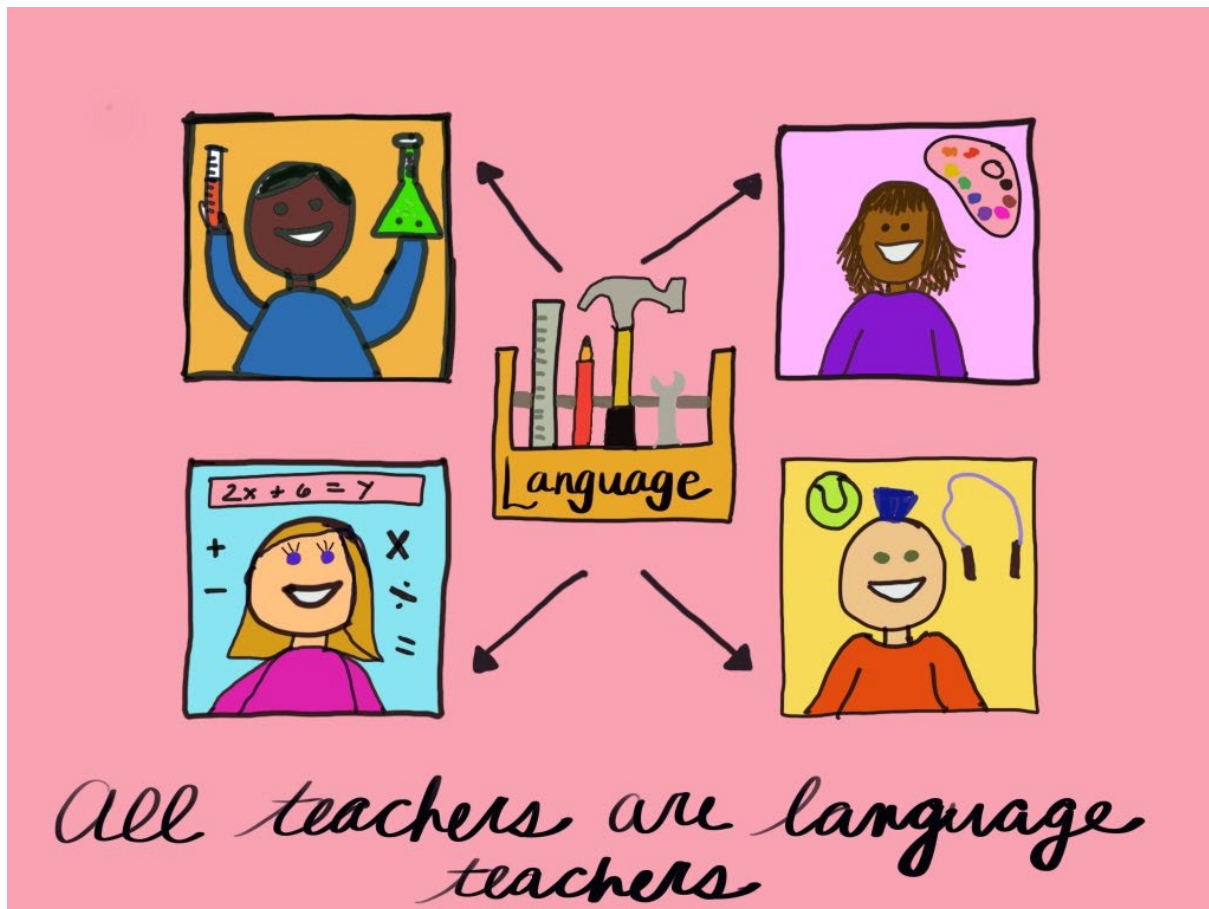
- the notion of 'every teacher is a language teacher'
- the importance of knowing the language ability of individual learners and why some learners may find writing tasks a particular challenge
- practical tips which teachers can use to help learners of all ability to develop their writing skills across the curriculum



**Ready  
for the  
world**

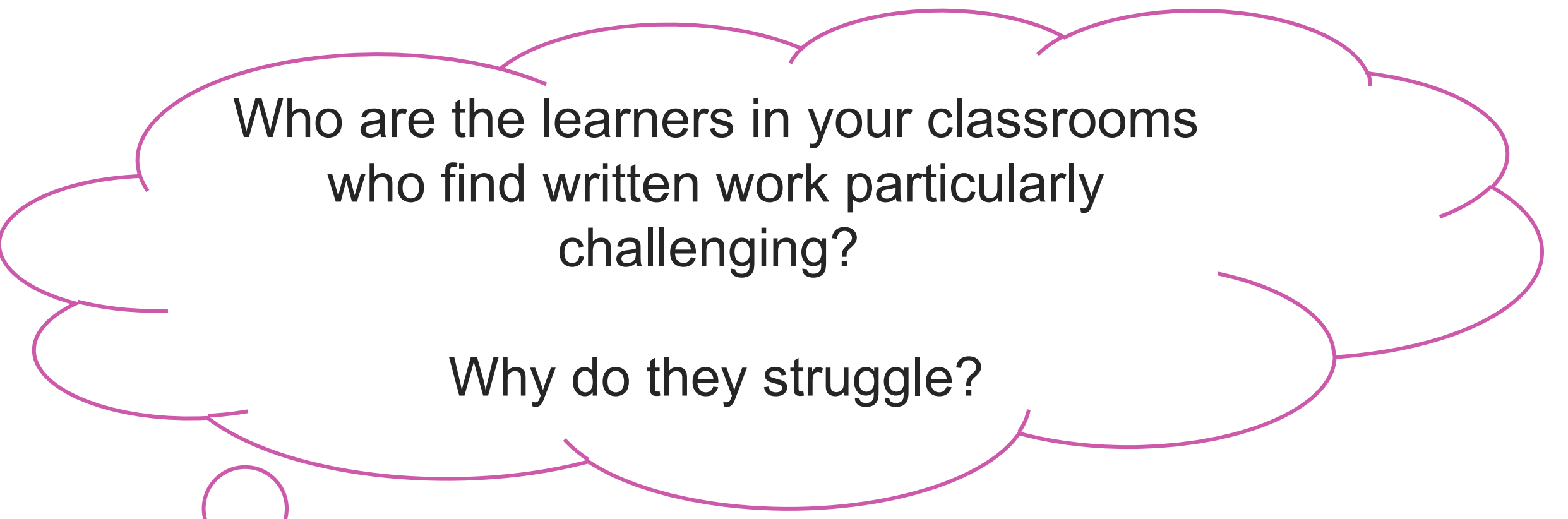
“But I teach X, I don’t know  
how to teach writing!”

# Every teacher is a language teacher



- All teachers are experts of the language of their subject
- All teachers can help learners to develop transferable writing skills

# The importance of knowing your learners



Who are the learners in your classrooms  
who find written work particularly  
challenging?

Why do they struggle?

# The importance of knowing your learners

Hypermobility

Dysgraphia

ADHD

Dyslexia

Hearing impairment

ASC

OCD

Degenerative  
visual impairment

Irlen Syndrome



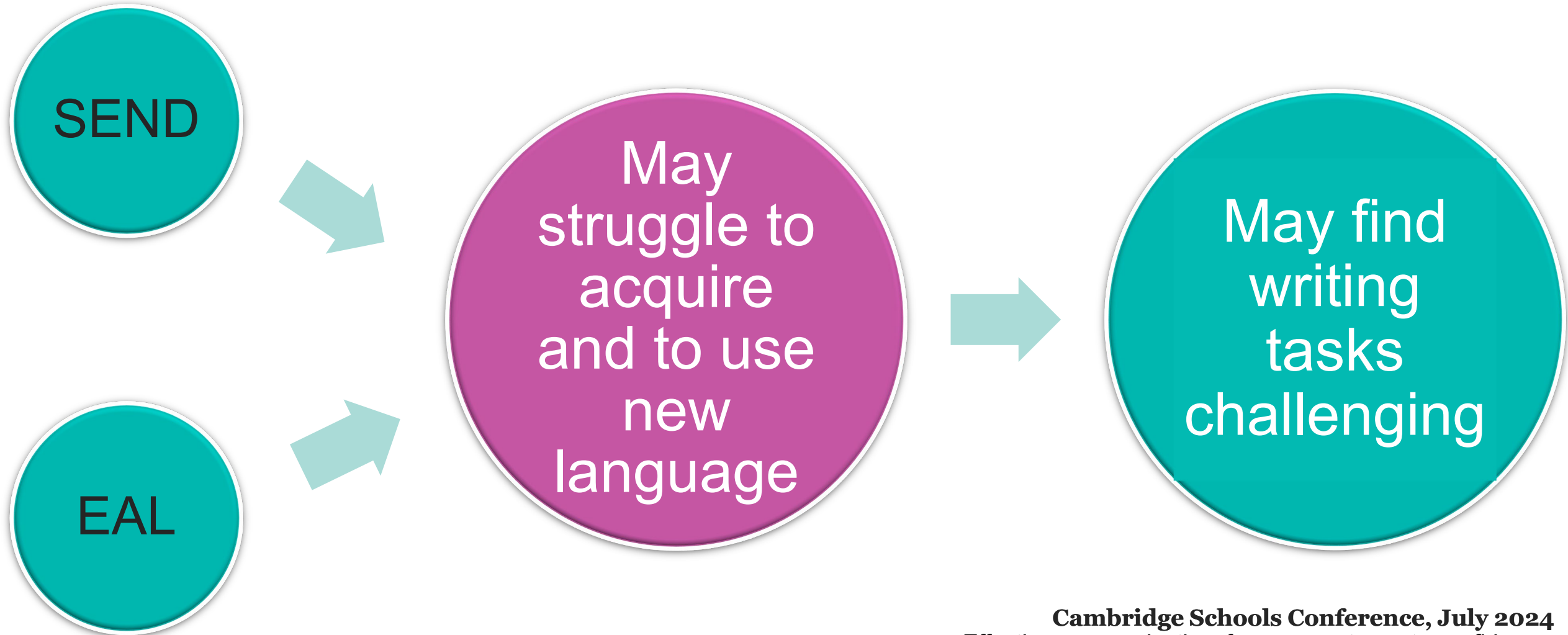
Manthan International School, Hyderabad

Generalised anxiety

EAL

Auditory processing disorder

# The importance of knowing your learners



# The importance of knowing your learners

Who in your classes might need support to understand and then use new language in their written work?

Who in your classes should be stretched and challenged to understand and use more complex language in their written work?



Blog on supporting learners with SEND in exams



Inclusive Education Brief



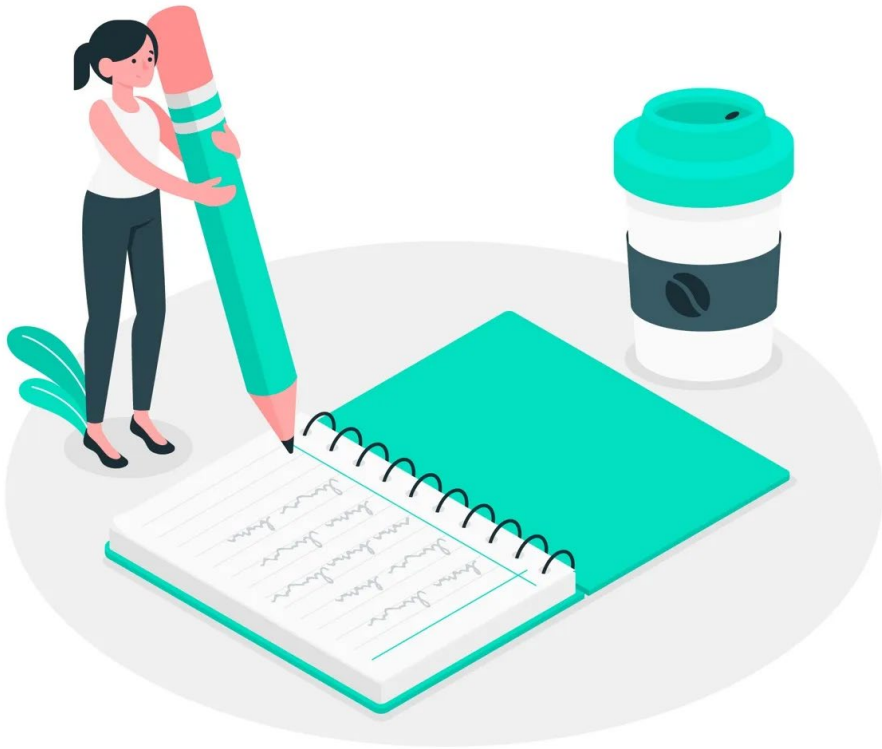
Podcasts on supporting neurodivergent learners



Access Arrangements Section 1.3



# How to help learners of all ability develop their writing skills across the curriculum



1. Word level

2. Sentence/paragraph level

Support those  
who struggle?

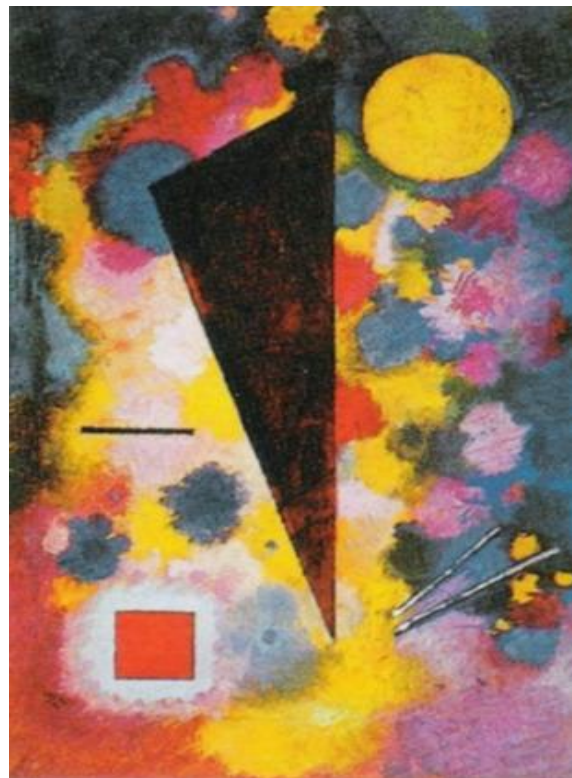
Stretch and  
challenge the  
more able

# How to help learners of all ability develop their writing skills across the curriculum

## Word level considerations



White Zig-Zag, 1922



Resonance Multicolore, 1928



Composition VII, 1913

Referring closely to these examples, explain Kandinsky's artistic style.

# Word level strategies

Crosswords

Wall displays

Vocabulary trees

Online vocab games

Match cards

Multiple meanings

Wordsearches


'Flyswat'/slap the board

Vocab bingo

# Word level strategy: Apps/online games



Your score: 0 / 6 1 / 6 [Next](#) >



Which word matches the image?

flat screenflash driveheadphones

ozanuysal/iStock/Getty Images Plus/GettyImages

# Word level strategy: Flyswat

Active

Performer

Passive

Exercise

Respiration

Health

Feedback

Cognitive

Effort

Aesthetic

Fitness

# Word level strategy: Wall displays

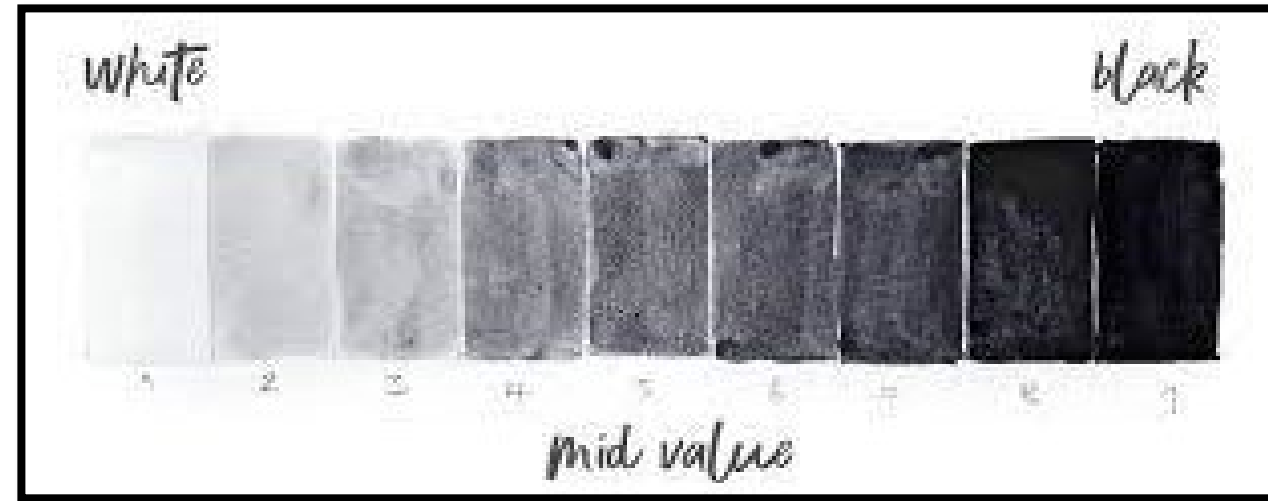
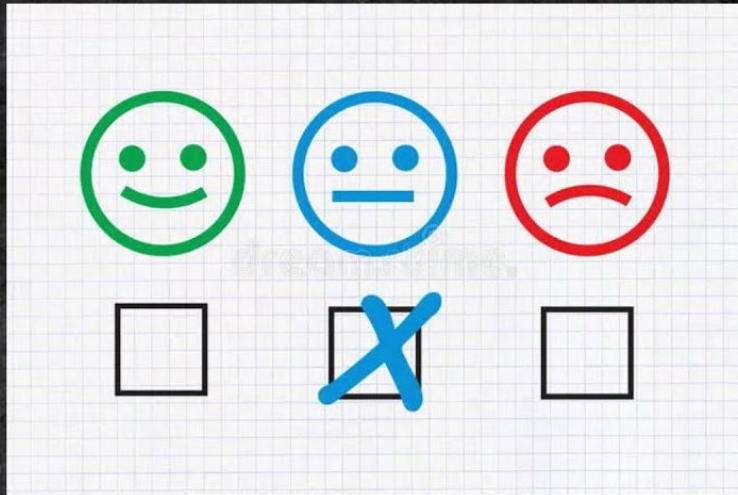
- Key verbs
- Complexity of vocabulary
- Command words and sentence starters
- Transferable academic vocabulary
- Parts of speech/grammatical function



# Word level strategy: Exploring multiple meanings

## *Neutral*

indifferent  
matter-of-fact  
mysterious  
ironic  
fanciful  
nostalgic  
detached





# Word level strategy: Exploring multiple meanings



Credit: Oliver Street

# Word level strategy: Vocabulary trees

Type of graphic organiser:

- **Trunk** – key term
- **Roots** – the definition and root word
- **Branches** – related words, ideas, examples
- **Leaves** – definitions, key facts about the branched-out words

# Word level strategy: Vocabulary trees

Square

Polygon

Quadrilateral

Poly = many

Hexagon

Triangle

6 sides

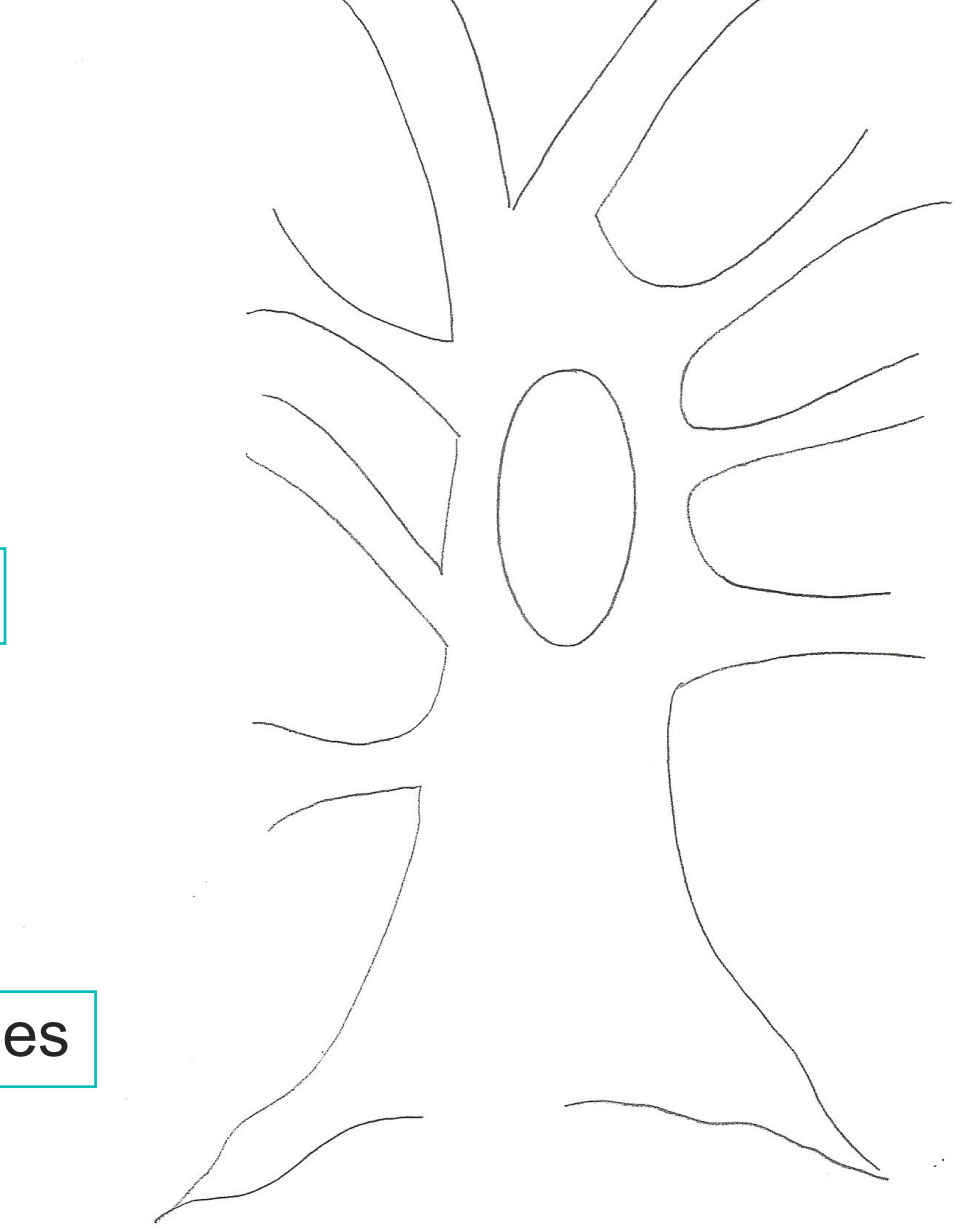
3 or more sides

Gon = angles

Rectangle

Octagon

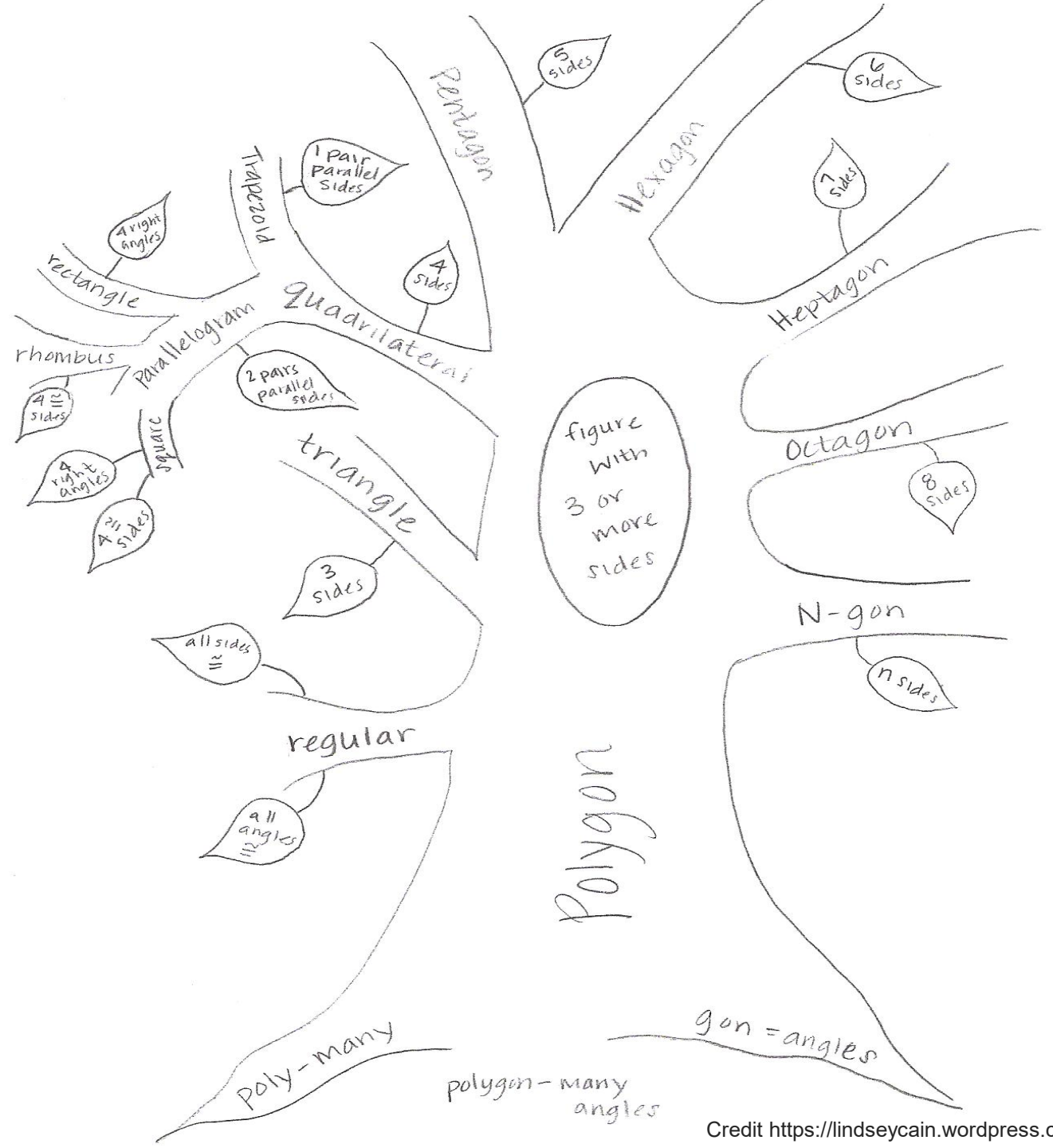
3 sides



created for the math classroom by Lindsey Cain

Credit <https://lindseycain.wordpress.com/>

# Word level strategy: Vocabulary trees

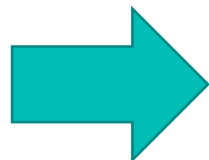


# How to help learners of all ability develop their writing skills across the curriculum

## Sentence level considerations

# Using language skills to sound ‘expert’

William was a good leader. He won the Battle of Hastings. He was very brave and ambitious. He always tried hard.



William’s strong leadership skills coupled with his immense courage, ambition and determination helped him to be victorious at the Battle of Hastings.

# Sentence level strategies

Cloze texts / gap fills

Verb phrases

Sentence starters

Jumbled up responses

Expanded noun phrases

Exploiting model responses

Comparing responses

Clause combining

# Sentence level strategy: Clause combining

**There was a lack of scientific knowledge in medieval England. The causes of illness and disease remained a mystery.**

1. There was a lack of scientific knowledge in medieval England **and** the causes of illness and disease remained a mystery.
2. There was a lack of scientific knowledge in medieval England **which meant that** the causes of illness and disease remained a mystery.
3. **Since** there was a lack of scientific knowledge in medieval England, the causes of illness and disease remained a mystery.



# Sentence level strategy: Encouraging the use of expanded noun phrases

- Greenhouse gases are increasing, mainly due to fossil fuels.

Concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are increasing, mainly due to the global use fossil fuels.

- Climate change must be tackled.

The ever-increasing problem of human-caused climate change must be tackled.

# Sentence level strategy: Encouraging the use of expanded noun phrases

- Charles III, \_\_\_\_\_, is the oldest person to accede to the throne.
- Hippocrates, \_\_\_\_\_, believed that the stars and planets had an impact on health.

# Sentence level strategy: Encouraging the use of expanded noun phrases

- Charles III, **King of the United Kingdom**, is the oldest person to accede to the throne.
- Hippocrates, **a leading physician from Ancient Greece**, believed that the stars and planets had an impact on health.

# Sentence level strategy: Modelling

“No matter what you teach, write in front of students... Admitting my weaknesses helps my students become less defensive about their own work, and in turn more open to criticism.”

Credit: David Cutler, Edutopia, George Lucas Foundation

# Sentence level strategy: Exploiting model responses

- Introduce transferable patterns of language
- Address common language related issues
- Examine the complexity of the vocabulary or phrases
- Highlight sophisticated grammatical structures
- Create a summary or reduce the text to key bullets, then rewrite it with language-related expectations for additional challenge
- Use as a source for many other written language development strategies

# Thank you!

**Cambridge Schools Conference, July 2024**  
Effective communication: from competence to confidence