



New Words

- Nobody knows what every word means. It's important to **create a culture** that lets children know:
 - It is normal to say that you don't understand something – this is the beginning of them monitoring their own comprehension.
 - It's OK to ask someone what a word means – this is the beginning of them learning strategies to manage their own comprehension.

Let children hear you use these strategies – this normalises the strategies. As children's use of text becomes more advanced, they can be explicitly taught other strategies such as using word categories, morphology etc. to support reading comprehension.

- *Best Friends Never Give Up* contains some words that children may not hear during their everyday conversation at home. As you read the story you need to **be prepared to provide children with simple explanations for these words that fit the context of the story**. I've listed some potentially unfamiliar words here:

Harbour	Unpredictable	Swipe	Smoochy
Persuade	Bach	Scent	Paddling
Plunge	Concentrating	Disgusting	Whine
Wander	Hike	Vanish	Investigate
Miserable	Clue	Disappoint	Orchard
Imagine	Haul	Colossal	Heave
Sinkhole	Ecstatic	Delight	Ravenous

- Exploring unfamiliar words
Don't worry, I'm not suggesting that you try to teach children all these words at once. However, there might be one or two words the child is particularly interested in, or perhaps there's a word that relates to other conversations you're having this week.

How you explore unfamiliar words with children depends on the child's world knowledge and word knowledge.

Take the word 'harbour' for example:

- If a child has never seen a **harbour**, it will be helpful to take them to a harbour or to show them pictures in books, videos online etc. Talk about harbours, what they are for, what they smell like etc. Ask the child to draw one and/or make up a story about one. You can write the word down for them. Maybe they can tell you what sound it begins with and so on.
- If the child already has a good sense of what a **harbour** is, it may be more important to focus on the sounds that make up the word. What sound does it begin/end with? How many syllables does it have? Does it rhyme with anything? Ask them to sound it out? Can they write it down? Are there any interesting spelling rules that you can point out?

Around this time children might also enjoy thinking about **shades of meaning**. I really enjoy doing this. For example, when writing about walking in *Best Friends Never Give Up*, I used words like **wander**, **hike**, or **trudge**. Give children opportunities to think about the different shades of meaning these words have.

“Charlie joined her, and the two friends **wandered** down the garden wagging their tails and sniffing the grass.”

“They **hiked** through all the fields surrounding the garden and they rowed around the lake.”

“Alayne **trudged** through the field behind the compost heap.”

- Other children might be ready to extend their knowledge of the **harbour** further by exploring things like:
 - i. Polysemy – **harbour** also means...?
 - ii. Synonym – what words mean the same as the **harbour**?
 - iii. Antonyms – do any words mean the opposite of any of the definitions of **harbour**?
 - iv. Etymology – where did the word **harbour** originate?
 - v. Morphology – root, affixes (pre-fixes, suffixes)