



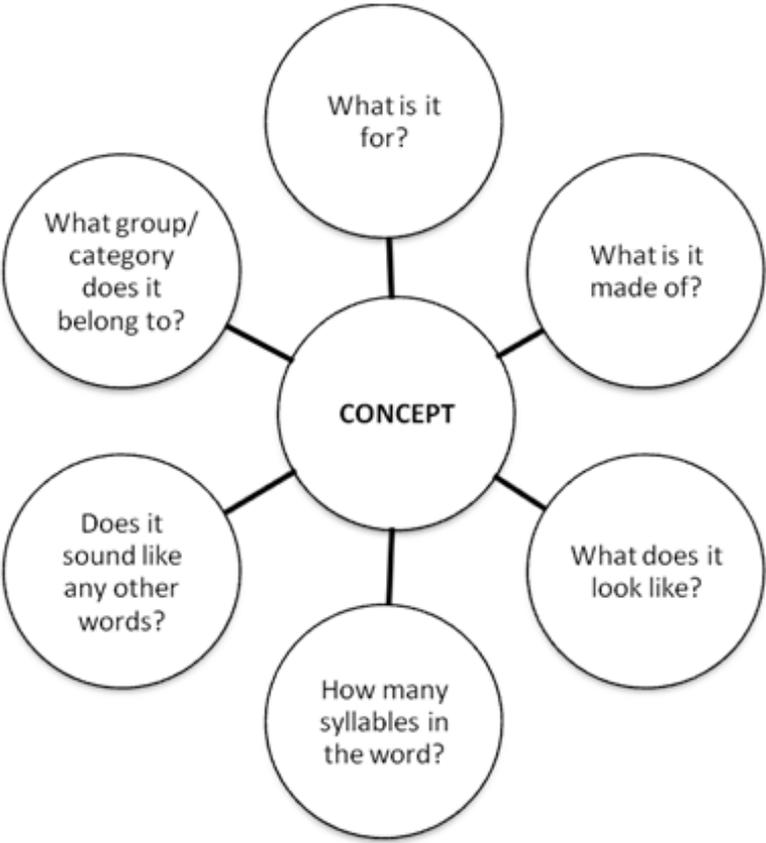
**Speech Language and Communication Needs:  
Supporting Vocabulary**

Young people with speech, language and communication needs, often struggle with learning and retaining new vocabulary in secondary schools. They need regular revision and repetition of new concepts:

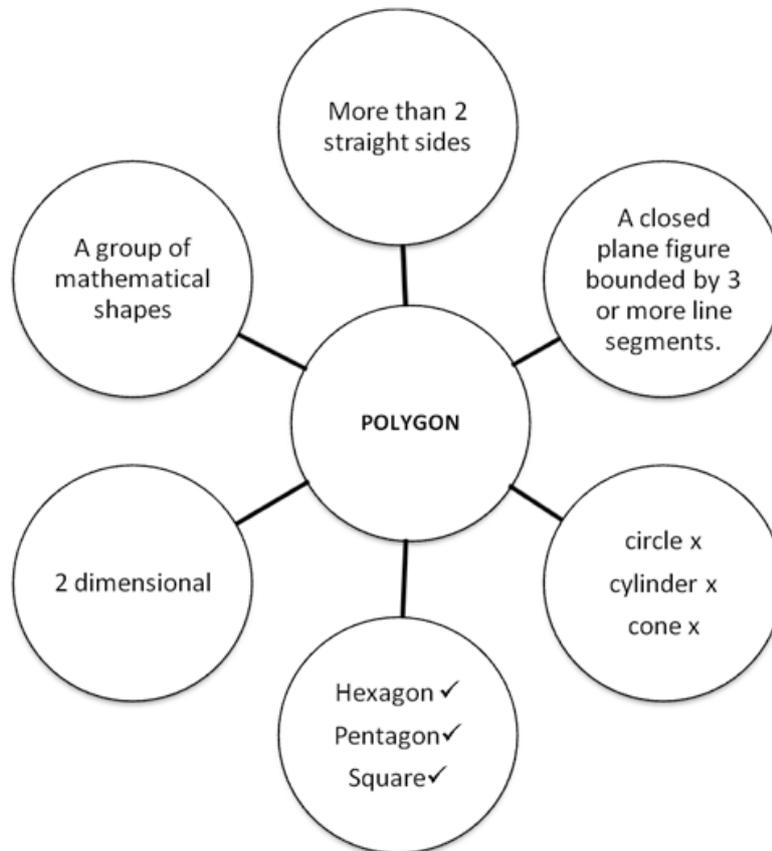
**Concept Definition Graphic Organiser**

This is a strategy for helping older pupils learn and retain key concepts. Maps or graphic organisers are used to help the learner understand the essential attributes, qualities or characteristics of a words meaning.

To create a concept graphic organiser, decide what key information helps the learner to fully understand meaning and to remember the word e.g.



These are only examples, and you may need to have different prompts depending on the target vocabulary. An example of a concept graphic organiser for the word 'polygon' is included overleaf.

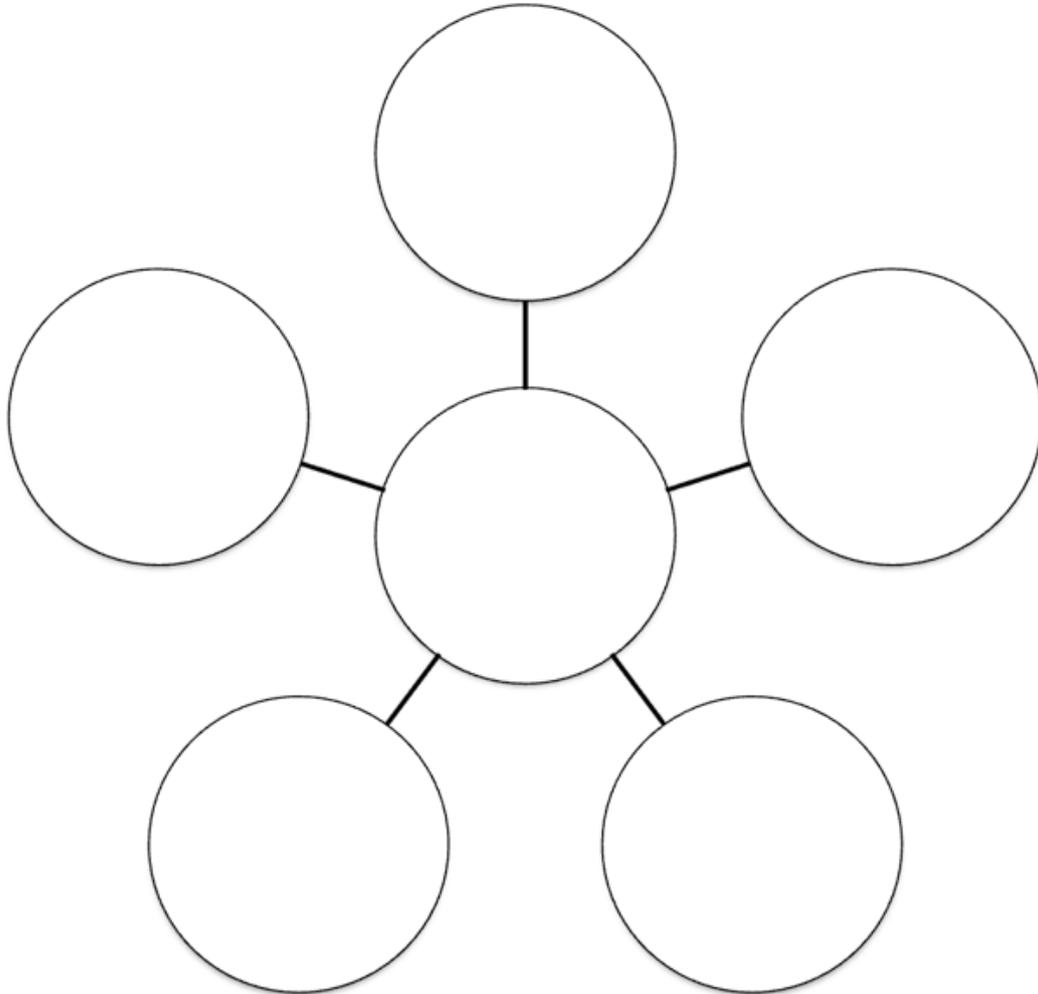


It is important to use graphic organiser consistently when introducing new vocabulary and to be clear with the learner why they are being used e.g. to help remember new vocabulary. They will work well alongside topic or theme based dictionaries which help learners to link groups of related vocabulary together.

A blank concept organiser has been included with this advice.



**What do I know about this word?**





## Ideas to Support Vocabulary Learning

- Introduce personal word dictionaries in which pupils record words as they introduced to them
- Highlighted key words in work sheets, notes and text for the pupil with SLCNs
- 'Jigsaw cards' – pupils match words with definitions
- 'Lucky Dip' - pupil picks a word and explains what they know about it
- Write key words on the whiteboard as they are used- don't rely on auditory skills alone. Writing and repetition will help reinforce meaning.
- Revise key vocabulary regularly so that students hear the words and repeat them often to embed meaning
- Group words/concepts – encourage the whole group to arrange words and their definitions into themes and concepts
- Sentence Completion – pupils make fill in the gaps using key subject vocabulary
- 'Just a minute' – pupils select a word from the box and talk for a minute about it
- 'Guess my word' – pupil picks a word and talks about it without saying the word. Rest of the group have to guess the word as quickly as possible
- 'Draw my word' – a version of the game 'Pictionary'. Individuals pick a word out of the box and draw it for the rest of the group in 30 seconds
- 'Word bingo' where the teacher reads out the definition and the pupils strike out the word on their cards
- Word cluster or word cloud posters for key subject vocabulary



## Strategies to Help Educators Support Pupils with Word-Finding Difficulties

It is important that we support pupils with word finding difficulties by helping them to recognise what is happening to them, for example you might want to say something like:-  
'I think you know that word, let's see if we can help you to remember it'

If a pupil is more aware then they are better able to monitor and control their difficulties and to take responsibility for using retrieval strategies

There are two main strategies to help a learner recall a word which they know but can't retrieve. Some pupils react better to one strategy rather than the other. These strategies are called 'cueing'. This means that we give the pupil a prompt to facilitate their recall or response.

Phonological cueing: Some prompts to help with retrieval

- ✓ What sound does it begin with?
- ✓ Is it a long word or a short word?

Semantic cueing: Some prompts to help with retrieval

- ✓ What other words go with this word? (Category)
- ✓ What does it do? (Function)
- ✓ Where might you find it? (Context)
- ✓ Can you describe it? (Description)
- ✓ What else is like this? or What else can you do like this? (Similarity)
- ✓ What else does it make you think of? (Association)

