

THE SELECTIVE VOcab LADDER™

The Selective Vocab Ladder

See exactly which words move
your child from 60% → 80%+ in writing



WHY VOCAB IS THE SECRET 20%

Markers won't tell you this... but vocabulary accounts for a MASSIVE chunk of the writing score.

A script with:

- strong structure
- decent ideas
- okay grammar

...will STILL stay around 60–70% if the vocabulary is basic.

A script with:

- precise words
- sensory verbs
- mature emotional vocabulary
- figurative language used properly

...instantly jumps into 80–90% territory.

Why this ladder helps:

- ✓ shows parents exactly what's "basic" vs "selective-level"
- ✓ gives kids a roadmap of what vocab to aim for
- ✓ removes subjectivity
- ✓ provides a list they can use tonight
- ✓ replaces random memorisation with structured improvement

HOW TO USE THIS VOCAB LADDER

1. Identify your child's current tier.
2. Help them move up one tier at a time.
3. Use the example sentences as models.
4. Use the Swap This → For This page weekly.
5. Use the 10-minute drill daily.

Your goal isn't memorisation.

Your goal is selective-ready fluency.

TIER 1: BASIC VOCABULARY (Band 3–Low Band 4)

These words are TOO SIMPLE for Selective.

Tier 1 Words to avoid:

nice, good, bad, sad, happy, angry, fun, scary, big, small,
ran, walked, looked, said, felt, helped, made, did, thought, things/stuff

Example Sentences:

“I felt sad when my friend left.”

“It was a big storm.”

“He was angry.”

Diagnosis: Weak impact. No imagery. Primary-level.

TIER 2: STRONG INTERMEDIATE VOCAB (High Band 4–E

Examples:

gloomy, determined, uneasy, fragile, shimmering, echoed, trembled, darted,
hesitated, glanced, murmured, gripped, crackled, glimmer, chill, whisper,
uncertain, gentle, delicate, distant

Example Sentences:

“A faint chill crept across the room.”

“Her voice trembled with uncertainty.”

“The distant thunder echoed through the valley.”

TIER 3: SELECTIVE-LEVEL VOCAB (Band 6)

Examples:

resonated, lingered, coiled, fractured, surged, immersed, glinted,
reverberated, veiled, fragmented, harrowed, steadfast, tethered,
turbulent, weightless, ephemeral, reluctance, flickered, recoiled, unravelled

Example Sentences:

"A quiet sadness lingered beneath her smile."

"Hope flickered like a fragile flame in the darkness."

"Memories unravelled piece by piece."

SWAP THIS → FOR THIS

sad → sombre / aching / heavy-hearted

scared → uneasy / tense / on edge

angry → agitated / seething / irate

looked → glimpsed / observed / studied

walked → strode / crept / drifted

said → murmured / whispered / declared

big → vast / towering / immense

small → delicate / subtle / fragile

fun → exhilarating / electrifying

bad → dreadful / unsettling / harrowing

PHRASE COMBINATIONS

Emotion + Sensory + Action = Band 6

Emotion + Sensory:

“A quiet guilt coiled in my chest.”

Sight + Emotion:

“Her smile flickered, veiled by sadness.”

Movement + Foreshadowing:

“Shadows drifted across the floor.”

10-MINUTE VOCAB BOOSTER DRILL

Daily routine:

- Pick 3 Tier 3 words.
- Write 1 sensory sentence for each.
- Combine them into a mini paragraph.
- Replace 2 Tier 1 words from old writing.

Daily repetition → vocabulary fluency skyrockets.

SUMMARY

Your child's vocab level = their writing level.

Tier 1 → Band 3–4

Tier 2 → Band 5

Tier 3 → Band 6

If you want your child to:

- master Band 6 vocabulary
- write standout selective scripts
- get weekly marked tasks with feedback
- learn sensory, precise, powerful language
- build depth without memorising random lists

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