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"Supporting Children who are Learning English as a Second Language"

A presentation on language techniques to engage with and support children who are learning English as a second language.

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We acknowledge the tradition of custodianship and law of the Country on which the University of Sydney campuses stand. We pay our respects to those who have cared and continue to care for Country.



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Australia is a
culturally and
linguistically
diverse nation





2016 Census:

Over 300 identified languages were spoken in Australian homes.

21% of Australians spoke a language other than English.



What do you know about ESL?



What is ESL?

1. Students whose first language is a language or dialect other than English.
2. Who may require additional support to develop proficiency in English.



Students from an ESL background may include:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

2. Immigrants to Australia and temporary visa holders from non-English speaking countries.

3. Students with a refugee background.

4. Children born in Australia where English is not spoken at home.

5. English-speaking students returning to Australia after periods in non-English speaking settings.

6. Children of adults who are deaf & use Auslan as their first language.

7. International students from non-English speaking countries.

ESL Students have diverse educational backgrounds!

They may have:

1. Schooling equivalent to their similar aged peers in Australia.

2. Limited or no previous education.

3. Already speak one or more additional languages or dialects other than English.

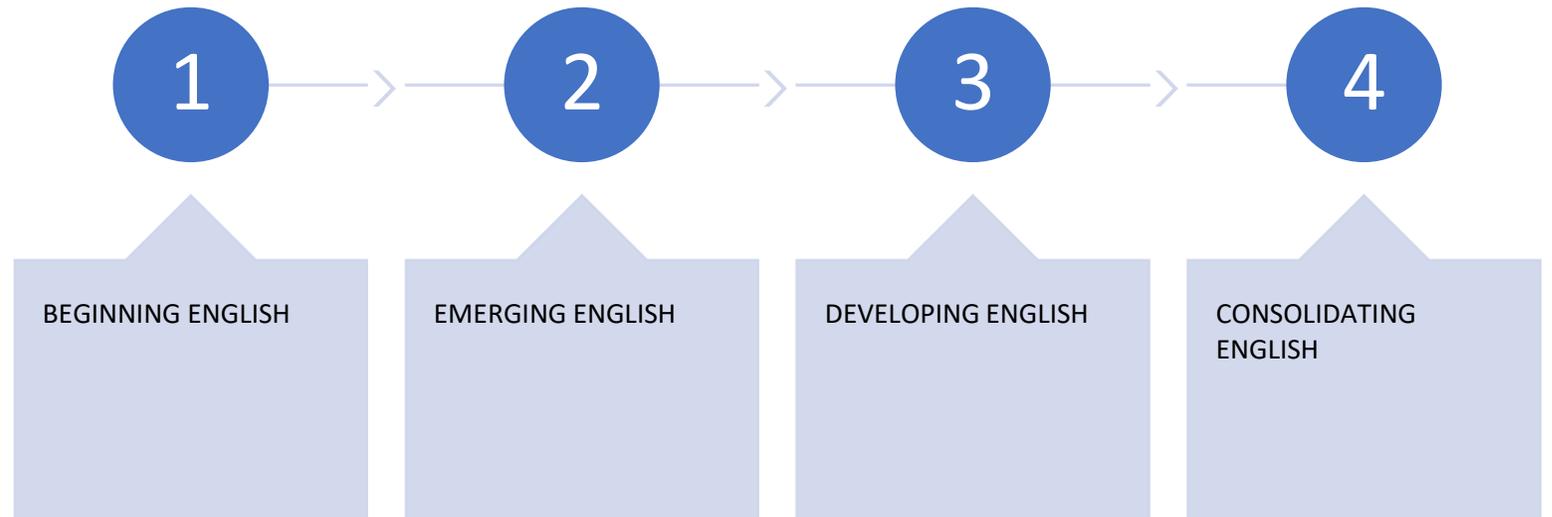
4. Different skill levels of language abilities across the modes of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

5. May have good academic language skills but have difficulties in different situational communication contexts (informal versus formal situations).

6. At a different phase of English learning development.



Australian Curriculum Stages of English Learning Development



Factors contributing to access and achievement in the classroom

Exposure

A student's exposure to the English language.

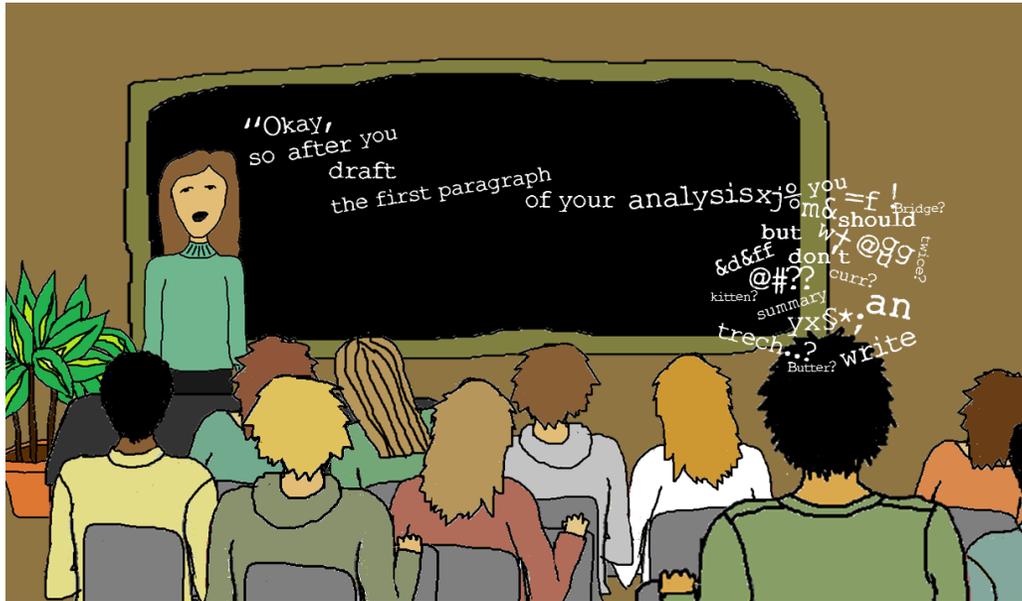


Proficiency

A student's skill level in using and understanding English.



Challenges in the Classroom



1. Difficulties accessing and succeeding in the curriculum.
2. Speaking and Listening Skills → oral language is pivotal in the classroom.
3. Feelings of embarrassment → reducing participation in the classroom.
4. Differences in writing systems, constructing texts and names of objects & concepts (vocabulary).

Language

Disorder

A deviation in language skills compared to their similar aged peers.

Difference

Differences in understanding and using English that are influenced by a child's first language and cultural experiences.

General Characteristics Between

Language Disorder	Language Difference
<p>Has difficulty with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Producing +/- understanding language.• Constructing sentences, vocabulary, understanding instructions.• Initiating or maintaining conversations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands and uses the rules of their first language.• Has no difficulty communicating with family members / community using their 1st language.• Exposure/Proficiency: Have difficulties participating and learning in the monolingual English Australian classroom.

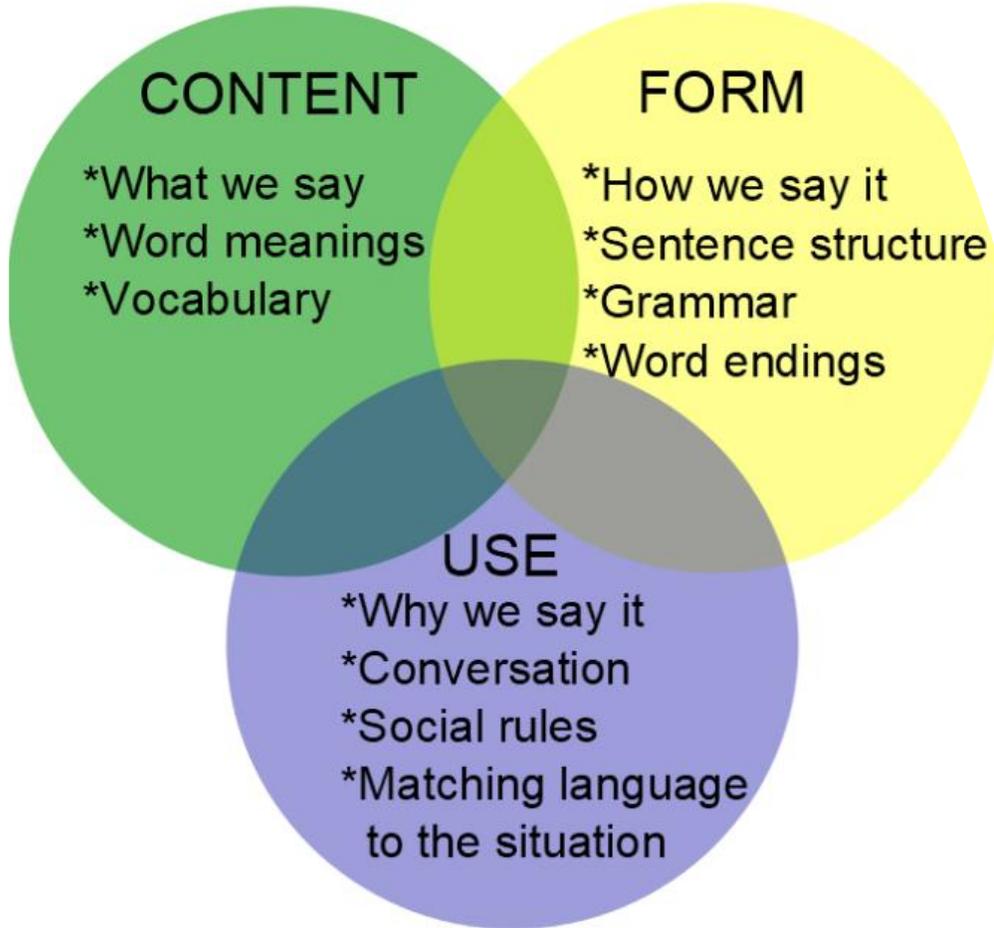
Case study

Alan is an energetic and motivated student in Year 2, who moved to Australia from China last year. Alan has been referred for an SLP assessment by his teacher, suspecting a language disorder. Although he likes being at school, his teacher reported he has difficulty following instructions and is behind in his reading, which is affecting his success in school.

Through an interpreter, Alan's mother reported he has an older brother at home, where they speak only Cantonese. He hears English mostly at school and his mother hasn't had any concerns about his development, meeting all the milestones at a similar age to his older brother.

Language Disorder or Language Difference?

Parts of Language



7 tips for teaching ESL

1	Increase amount of English that the child hears
2	Use the child's interests to facilitate their learning
3	Teach through interaction (not worksheets and flashcards)
4	Do activities that require meaningful communication
5	Give lots of examples
6	Teach new words and grammar together
7	Use lots of visuals

Tip 1: Increase amount of English that the child hears

Because children learn what they hear most

REPEAT



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Tip 2: Children Learn Words for Things and Events That Interest Them

- The child's interest plays an essential role in any type of learning. Importantly, what is appealing to one child may be different to another
- From your experience, what have you found to be of interest to the children you work with?



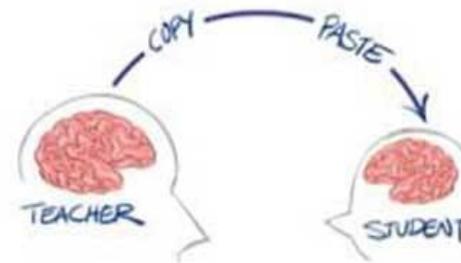
Tip 3: Interactive and responsive activities promote language learning (no flashcards!)

Play-based activities that capture children's attention through interaction can often give children more opportunity to acquire language in a functional way that transfers more readily to the "real world".



Tip 4 - Children learn words best in meaningful contexts.

Don't just drill. Set up the environment so the child has an incentive to use the target words and grammar in a way that has some meaning to them in the real world (e.g. requesting something he wants but can't reach, or describing something only she can see).



Tip 5 - Children need to hear lots of examples of words and language structures

- Children need lots of different examples from different people in different places to learn.
- Hearing different examples helps children understand multiple meanings of words
- This is particularly important for verbs

“She sang a song” or “She sang”

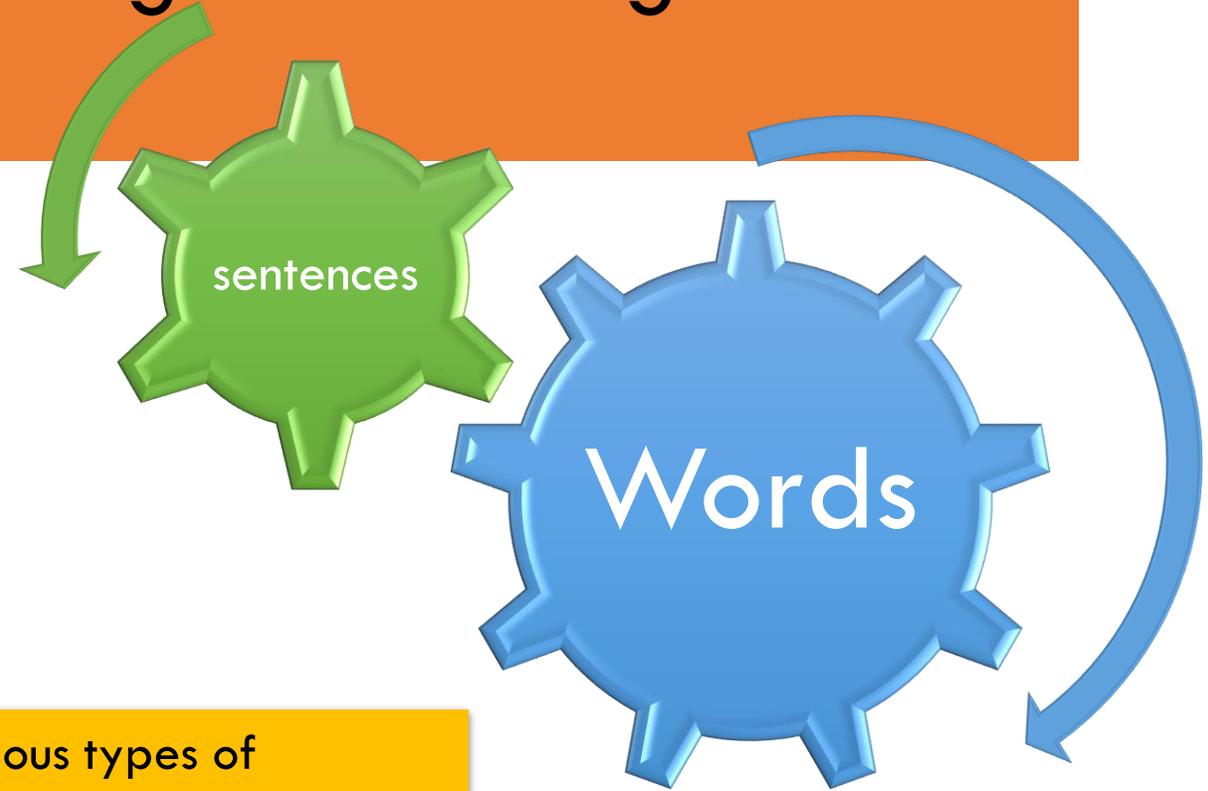
vs

“Please bring coffee”



Tip 6- Teach new words and grammar together

- The context of a word in a sentence shows us its meaning
- New words and grammar should be worked on together. Learning more vocabulary enhances a child's knowledge of grammar and vice versa.



One way to foster this is to introduce new words in various types of sentences. For example, following instruction tasks appear to be effective in promoting beginner ESL children's vocabulary and grammar knowledge. In these tasks, learners need to first listen to commands and then perform actions to show that they have understood the commands.



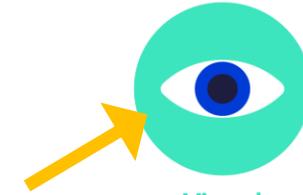
Tip 7 - Use lots of visuals!

Visuals break down information into manageable pieces that are easier to absorb.

Visuals increase the student's interest in the subject matter.

Visuals are a universal language!

VARK LEARNING STYLES



Visual



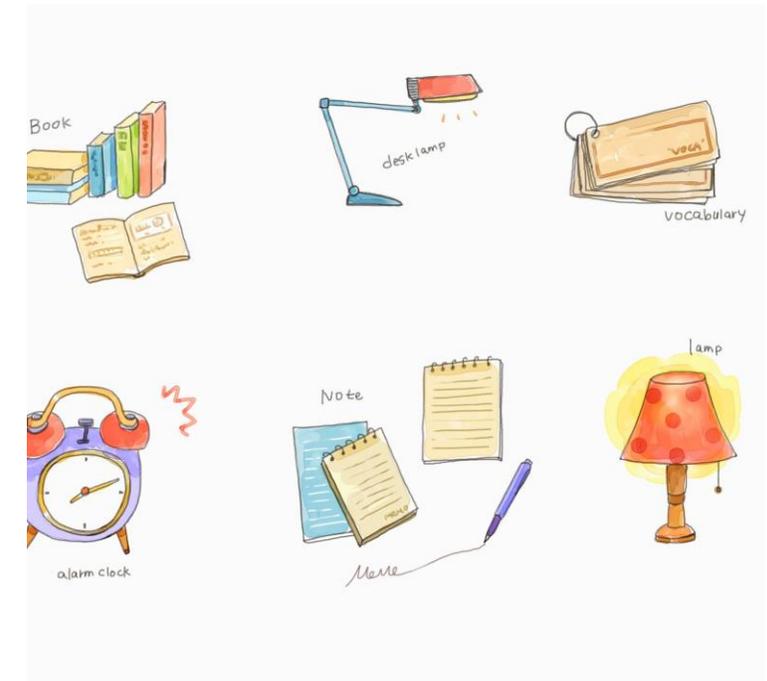
Auditory



Reading/Writing



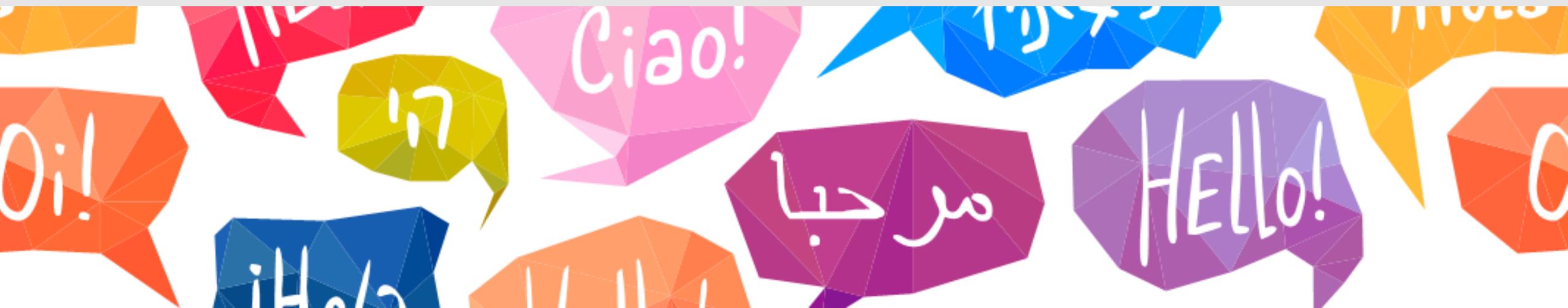
Kinesthetic





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOckLEkdPz4>

Have a think: which principles does this teacher use in his ESL class?



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Case study

You are working with an 8 year old girl called Emily, who has been living in and attending school in Australia for 12 months. She is really interested in fairies and loves reading rainbow magic fairy books in mandarin.

This week, Emily's class are learning the word 'deep'.

How would you go about teaching the word 'deep' to Emily?

What are some strategies you could use to support her?



Note: not actually Emily

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Want to know more?

Introducing: Speechie Library Talks

Throughout November 2021 members of Speech Pathology Australia are visiting libraries across Australia to help parents and carers build their children's language and literacy skills. In a series of presentations, parents and carers can learn about how to choose and select the best books and how to engage their young readers, and listen to a reading of one of the Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year award winning books.

Event: Supporting children's bilingualism through book reading

- Join speech pathologist Nisrine El Choueifati as she discusses bilingualism and children's language and literacy.
- Parents of bilingual children are often concerned that being bilingual can have a detrimental effect on their child's learning, language and literacy. The focus of Nisrine's presentation is that bilingualism doesn't cause delay – this is generally caused by other reasons. Nisrine will also discuss how do parents work out if their child has a learning difficulty? And how can parents support their child's bilingualism through book reading?

About Nisrine El Choueifati

Nisrine El Choueifati has worked as a speech pathologist with children, families and communities for 16 years. She believes in the power of books and early literacy experiences to support bi-lingualism. Nisrine is committed to being an advocate for positive bilingualism and cultural inclusion.

[Session 1: Tuesday 9 November 2021 10.30 am](#)

[Session 2: Wednesday 10 November 2021 7.30 pm](#)

https://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/SPAweb/whats_on/Book_of_the_Year/Speechie_Library_Talks/SPAweb/What_s_On/Book_of_the_Year/Speechie_Library_Talks.aspx?hkey=0e47b28e-71dd-4843-a602-e1636e2db658&fbclid=IwAR38Z4_uyqjbaWYxeTQZfveAldl1UvYjvxFIOxupgjXyPFfpPenox43helk



Questions



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Teaching vocabulary – an example

Let's say we're teaching the word: *analyse*

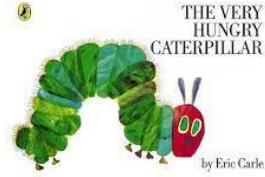
- 1. Define the word:** analyse means to study something closely and carefully
- 2. Provide some similar words:** examine, study
- 3. Talk about how the word sounds:** starts with an 'a', has 3 syllables
- 4. Provide some examples (Principle 1 & 5 & 7)**



Teaching vocabulary – an example - cont

4. Find something of interest
to the child that you could
analyse (Principle 2)

5. Analyse it together
(Principle 3)



NETFLIX

Teaching vocabulary – an example - cont

6. Find some pictures that show the word and talk about what the people are doing in pictures or videos (Principle 4&7)

7. Put analysing in a sentence (Principle 6&7)

