

The following system can then assist with making decisions about how to prioritise the tiered vocabulary that can be targeted in each new topic.

## MUST...SHOULD...COULD

### ‘Must know’ words

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*Essential* to the learning of a topic/concept. These words need to be systematically taught to enable students to recognise them on sight and/or hearing (usually Tier 2 words).

#### **Topic 1: Climate and Weather**

**Examples:** forecast, atmosphere, pressure, temperature, humidity, rainfall, drought, cyclone, meteorology, ozone.

#### **Topic 2: Shapes**

**Examples:** angles, sides, degrees, hexagon, pentagon, octagon, rhombus, parallelogram, regular, irregular,

“Vocabulary is one of the 5 pillars of learning to read.”

(Wheldall, 2011)

### ‘Should know’ words

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Words that are *highly significant* for understanding the topic (often Tier 2 words, but can be Tier 3 words)

**Topic 1 examples:** synoptic chart, isotherm, isobar, evaporation, precipitation, condensation, altitude, depression, trough, catchment.

**Topic 2 examples:** heptagon, nonagon, decagon, scalene triangle, trapezoid, pyramid, sphere.

### ‘Could know’ words

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These words are *not essential* for a basic understanding of topic/concept, however they are useful and interesting. Teachers might label these words as ‘extension vocabulary’. Word frequency is low, and restricted to specific curriculum content (usually Tier 3 words).

**Topic 1 examples:** barometer, troposphere, stratosphere, mesosphere, thermosphere.

**Topic 2 examples:** Polyhedron, tetrahedron, prism, kite, ellipsoid.

## Selecting essential vocabulary

- Is the word essential for students’ in-depth understanding of the topic?
- Will the word be used repeatedly in my teaching?
- Will students have multiple opportunities to use the word in their oral discussions and written work?
- If the word is complex (e.g. multisyllabic, unusual spelling, not often encountered in everyday language) do I have a strategy for supporting students’ word learning?