1. What percentage of the words in a text is it necessary to know in order to fully **understand** it?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 85% | 90% | 95% | 100% |

1. How many different **meanings** does the word ‘break’ have?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 25 | 40 | 55 | 70 |

1. What percentage of all the words in English are **polysemous**?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 40% | 60% | 70% | 80% |

1. How many **homophones** are there in the English language?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 300 | 400 | 500 | 600 |

1. How many **words** do students need to know in order to thrive academically?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 20,000 - 30,000 | 30,000 - 40,000 | 40,000 - 50,000 | 50,000 - 60,000 |

1. What percentage of **vocabulary** in academic texts has Latin and Greek origins?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 85% | 90% | 95% | 100% |

1. How many **children** do not own a single book?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 in 8 | 1 in 9 | 1 in 10 | 1 in 11 |

1. What does this rise to for **disadvantaged** children?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 in 5 | 1 in 6 | 1 in 7 | 1 in 8 |

1. What percentage of students reached the **expected** level for reading in 2019?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 73% | 78% | 83% | 88% |

1. How many more **words** do children who are read to daily hear compared to their peers who are not?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 million | 1.2 million | 1.4 million | 1.6 million |

1. What percentage of children are **read** to daily at home?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 31% | 39% | 46% | 53% |

1. What percentage more **words** do 14-year-olds who are read to regularly tend to know compared to those who rarely read?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 14% | 20% | 26% | 32% |

1. What percentage of students in a typical classroom could be **classified** as ‘poor readers’?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5% | 6% | 7% | 8% |

Sources: *Closing the Vocabulary Gap* and *Closing the Reading Gap*, by Alex Quigley; *The Secret of Literacy: Making the Implicit Explicit*, by David Didau

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**The Wider Context**

* 1 in 6 people in the UK possess a literacy level below that expected of an 11-year-old
* Seven million adults in England cannot locate the page reference for a plumber in a telephone directory
* More than half of British motorists cannot interpret road signs properly

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**Focus on Vocabulary**

* You need to know 95% of the words in a text in order to fully understand it
* Decoding language is different from understanding it (a word like ‘break’ has as many as 70 different meanings)
* Around 80% of all the words in English are polysemous
* There are around 500 homophones in the English language
* Students need to know between 50,000 - 60,000 words to thrive academically
* Over 90% of the vocabulary in academic texts has Latin and Greek origins
* Children’s books typically contain more ‘rare’ words than the language used on television

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**Focus on Reading**

* 1 in 11 children do not own a single book (this rises to 1 in 8 for disadvantaged children)
* Only 73% of students reached the expected level for reading in 2019
* Children who are read to daily hear 1.4 million more words than their peers who are not read to daily
* Only 31% of children are read to daily at home
* 14-year-olds who read regularly tend to know 26% more words than those who rarely or never read
* As many as 8% of pupils in a typical classroom are ‘poor readers’

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| --- |
| **Some Takeaways**1. Focus on **oracy** (i.e. structured talk)… If you can say it, you can write it
2. Improve **teacher-talk**… You are the expert and you represent what ‘success’ sounds like
3. **Read** often and ‘guide’ the reading
4. Remember that successful comprehension is directly connected to background **knowledge**
5. Promote **proof-reading** and challenge apathy/indolence/slovenliness
6. **Love** language and demonstrate at every opportunity that you love it
 |

Sources: *Closing the Vocabulary Gap* and *Closing the Reading Gap*, by Alex Quigley; *The Secret of Literacy: Making the Implicit Explicit*, by David Didau