



## **Encouraging the development of vocabulary and word finding**

- Some children can have difficulties using the right words at the right time, this may result in short sentences, use of general words such as 'thing' 'it' or 'that' etc, giving up on sentences or using incorrect words. These difficulties may be due to specific word finding difficulties and/or delay in the development of their vocabulary skills.
- Vocabulary delay: This refers to a child who is learning vocabulary following a normal developmental pattern, but at a slower rate than their peers. This may be as a result of lack of exposure to the word, or general language delay. This delay will be evident in both their understanding and use of words.
- Word finding difficulties: This can appear in children who have a good understanding of words but have difficulties in recalling and retrieving specific words accurately and speedily. This can happen when naming pictures or objects, making requests, describing past experiences or events and speaking in spontaneous conversations.
- Delayed vocabulary and word finding difficulties can occur at the same time.



## **General Guidelines**

Children with difficulties in this area require often direct teaching of vocabulary with frequent opportunities to hear and say new words.

They need:

- Repeated exposure to the word
- A lot of information about:
  - The meaning of the word ( semantic information)
  - How the word is used (grammatical information)
  - What the word sounds like (phonological information)

See diagrams a-c for ideas on how to present this information.

## **Strategies for learning new vocabulary**

- Develop lists of core vocabulary for each topic covered in school. Include nouns, verbs and adjectives.
- Have a word book or folder to which the child can add new vocabulary. Use the format highlighted in diagrams a-c to ensure the child gains semantic, phonological and grammatical information about new words.
- Recap vocabulary that will be used during the lesson and give repeated exposure to it, to show the child how the words can be used in a variety of situations. This will encourage generalisation.

## **Strategies for helping children with specific vocabulary difficulties**

- Allow for extra time for the child to think of the word
- If the child often answers quickly, but inaccurately, encourage the child to wait a moment and think before answering.
- If the child can't think of the word, see if they can use the following strategies to sue themselves in:
  - Can you describe it?
  - What sound does it start with?
  - Is the word long or short?
  - What does the word rhyme with?
  - Can you write the word or picture it in your head?
- If the child still can't think of the word, accept the information they have given and give a forced choice e.g. 'do you mean x or y?' you could also try giving a sentence but leaving the target word out e.g. 'you drink out of a... (cup)'
- Alternatively, you could try helping the child by saying the initial sound of the target word.



## **Activities to Promote Vocabulary Development**

Choose a topic e.g. animals, furniture, toys, transport, food, Vikings, Romans, maths vocabulary. Collect together as many resources as you can about your chosen topic. Some useful sources are catalogues, magazines, libraries or computers.

### **1. Cut and Paste**

- Encourage the child to name pictures and say where they would be found e.g.
  - Transport – bus on the road  
boat on water
  
- Create a picture or start a scrap book by sticking the pictures in. try to talk about as many features of the item as possible
  - Aeroplane - wings, flies, holidays, passengers, pilot  
3 syllables  
belongs to category of transport

The child will need to hear the information/word repeated many times before they will begin to use it.

### **2. 'What am I?'**

- Cut and paste pictures from selection attached (or make your own), fold so the clues are on the back.
- Encourage the child to guess what/who you are from a description of the person/object
  - Teddy – it is furry  
It has two legs  
You can cuddle it  
You can take it to bed  
It begins with 't'

### 3. Odd one out

- Encourage the child to identify the odd picture/object out from a group of 3 or 4. Initially, make the 'odd' one from a completely different category e.g. car bus and dog.
- As the child improves with this activity, make the 'odd' one less obvious e.g. car, bus, aeroplane (2 go on the road, one in the sky).

### 4. Brainstorm

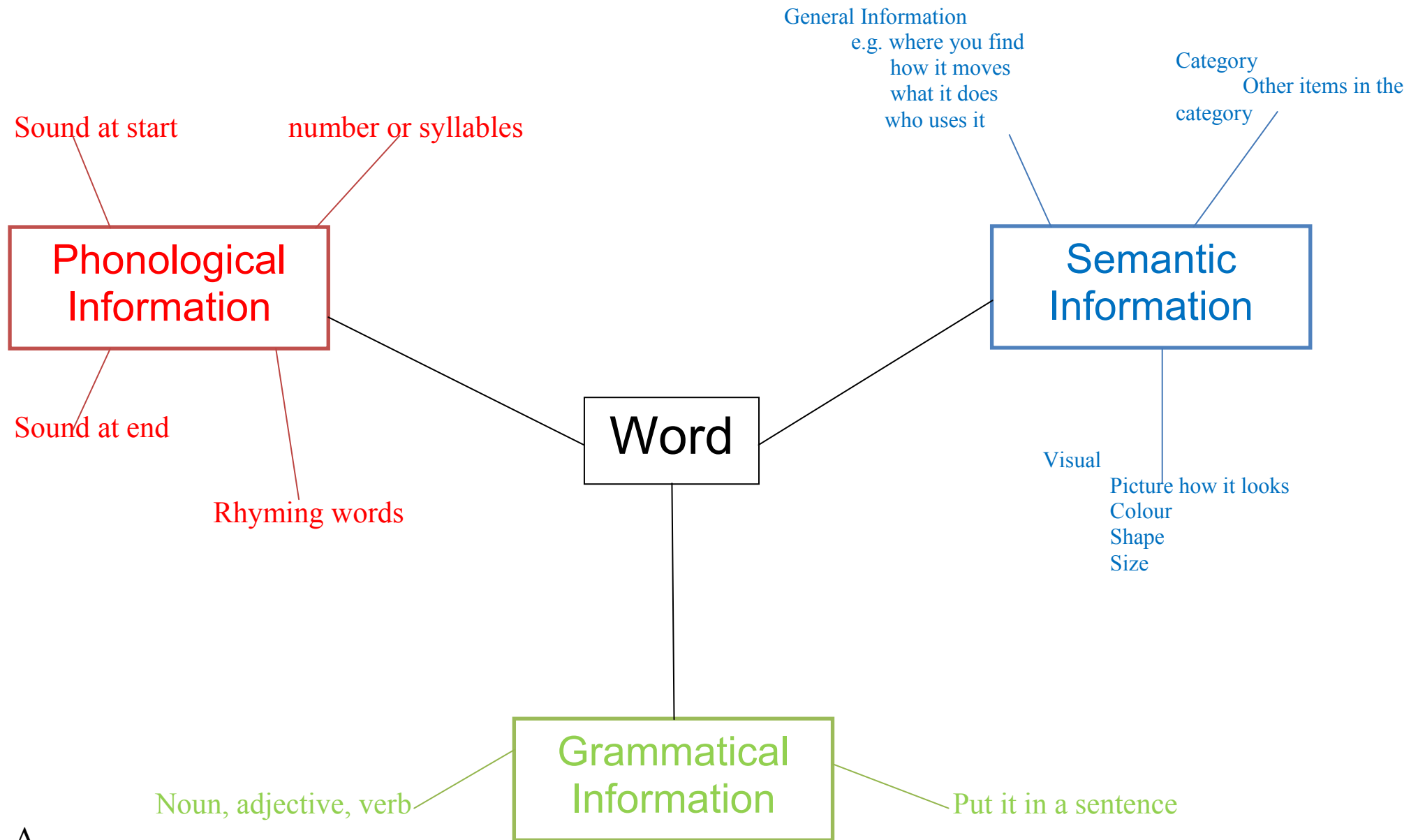
- Think of as many words as possible associated with a chosen topic e.g. seaside – sea, sand, shells, ice-cream etc
- The child could be guided by questions relating to different aspects of the topic e.g.:
  - What would you take to the seaside?
  - What do you do at the seaside?
  - What might you see at the seaside?

### 5. Sorting

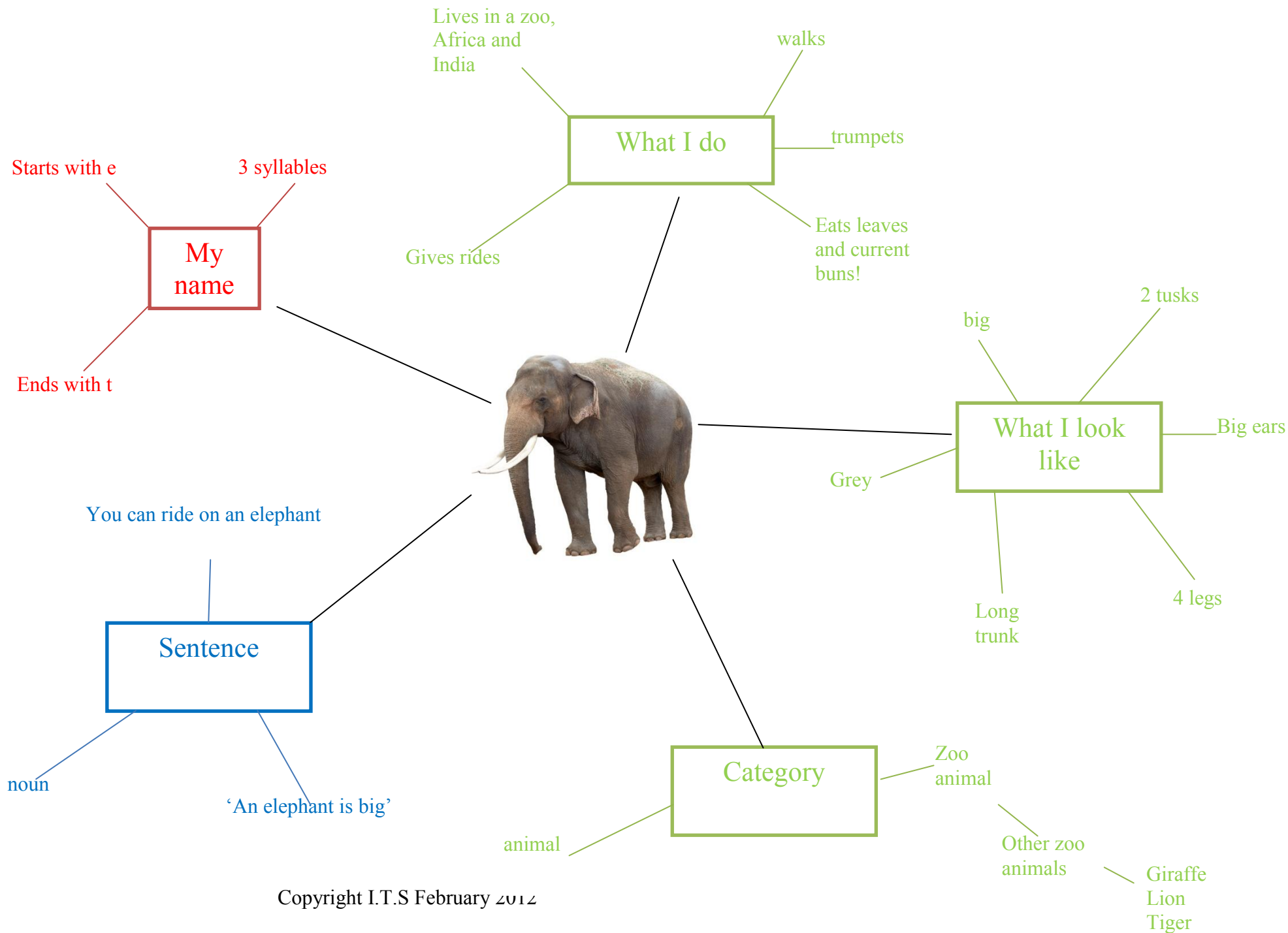
- Choose two contrasting topics e.g. transport and clothes, collect objects or pictures from each topic. Mix them up and ask the child to sort them into the appropriate topics. This activity can be adapted to sort items even within a topic e.g. zoo animals and farm animals.

### 6. Pairs game

- Use the pictures provided, cut them up and place face down on the table, the child can claim a pair in they find two that are related.



A





<b>Name:</b>	Longship	<b>Sound at start:</b>	l
<b>Category:</b>	Boat – Transport	<b>Sound at end</b>	p
<b>Features:</b>	colour – brown Size – big, long, thin Oars, sails, dragons heads	<b>Type of word</b>	noun
	boat'	<b>Sentence:</b>	'a longship is a Viking
<b>Functions:</b>	Carries Viking warriors to war Travels quickly		
<b>Where is it:</b>	Sailing on the sea Scandanavia		



