**Colourful Semantics**

**Introduction**

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**What is Colourful Semantics?**

Colourful Semantics is an approach created by Alison Bryan, a Speech and Language Therapist based in the UK. It is a method of teaching children how to understand and build sentences as well as to develop their grammar by linking the structure of a sentence (syntax) and the meaning of words (semantics).

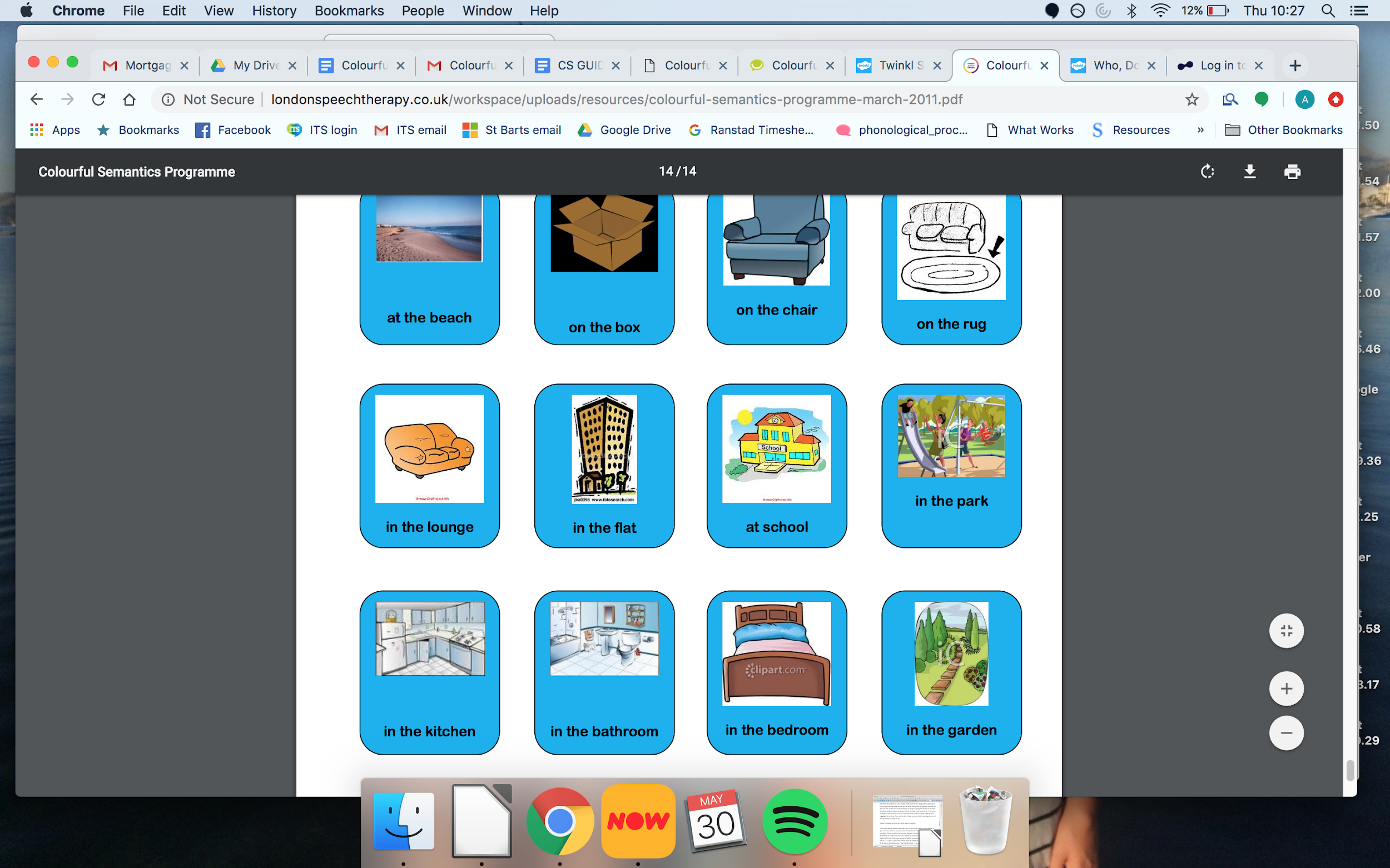
Colourful Semantics has four key stages and these are colour coded:

* + Who (Subject) – Orange
  + What doing (Verb) – Yellow
  + What (Object) – Green
  + Where – Blue

Once you have covered the above four stages, there are additional stages/colours for adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions and negatives. This image of a colour strip is an example of a child working at level 4.

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Pictures/symbols (as shown below) can also be used alongside the key colours for each stage to help with those who may have difficulties with vocabulary.



**Why use Colourful Semantics?**

Research into Colourful Semantics has found that it:

* Encourages a wider vocabulary
* Increases mean length of utterance/sentence length
* Helps children to answer questions (Who? Doing? What? Where?)
* Develops use of nouns, verbs, prepositions and adjectives
* Improves story-telling (narrative) skills
* Can be transferred to written sentences and reading comprehension
* Can be carried out individually or in small groups or as a whole class approach.

**Who can benefit from Colourful Semantics?**

The approach can be used to help all children develop their language skills, but it can be especially helpful for children with a range of Speech, Language and Communication Needs, including (but not limited to):

* Developmental Language Disorder (previously known as Specific Language Impairment)
* Developmental Delay or Disorder
* Autistic Spectrum Condition
* Down Syndrome
* Literacy difficulties
* Dyslexia
* English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Colourful Semantics also works brilliantly as a whole-school approach for supporting language and literacy development and can be used in all classrooms.

## **Who can implement it?**

A Speech and Language can train you on how to use Colourful Semantics with specific children or as a whole school approach. This then means that teachers and teaching assistants can then implement the approach to those who require support.

**Evidence for Colourful Semantics**

Studies have shown that the colourful semantics approach is a useful approach when working with children (Bolderson, Dosanjh, Milligan, Pring & Chiat, 2011). References Bolderson, S., Dosanjh, C., Milligan, C., Pring, T. & Chiat, S. (2011). Colourful semantics: a clinical investigation. Child Language Teaching and Therapy, 27, pp.344-353.