

The Vocab Clinic

Support your students towards better language use, with the help of our resident word-wizard, **Alex Quigley**...



TRY THIS TODAY: 'COLLECTING COLLOCATIONS'

When pupils read and write in the classroom, they will notice that some vocabulary routinely appears alongside 'familiar friends' in the form of collocations. When you hear the word 'account' in a history lesson, for instance, it will commonly be as a part of a collocation, such as 'historical account' or 'comprehensive account'.

With the help of resources such as the EAP Foundation's 'Academic Collocation List' (see bit.ly/ts113-vc1) we can encourage pupils to **collect collocations** and learn to use them habitually, thus developing their ability to write academically. We can nudge pupils towards collection opportunities when they use particular words. Consider 'argument', and the handy collocation examples 'counterargument', 'compelling argument' and 'valid argument', to name but a few.

Cracking the academic code

Across subjects as diverse as history, geography, English and science, pupils will be routinely called upon to express arguments in writing. This is one of the most common academic text types pupils will need to master – and a key, if somewhat subtle feature of academic arguments is the requirement to make clear, but '**tentative claims**'.



When making 'tentative claims' in a historical context, students might use adverbs like '*possibly*' or '*potentially*'. They may also utilise modal verbs like '*may*' and '*could*' to convey that they're uncertain about certain historical events, but are still in the process of carefully crafting an argument.

ONE FOR: HISTORY STUDENTS

REVOLUTION

Derives from: The Latin root '*revolvere*', meaning to 'turn back' – an origin that relates to revolving stars

Means: A great change in affairs, often involving the overthrow of an established political system

Related terms: Revolve, counter-revolution, revolt, rebel, regime change

Note: The term can be applied to changing political systems (e.g. the 'Russian Revolution') but also to certain periods of history (e.g. the 'Industrial Revolution')



DO THEY KNOW?

It's estimated that a third of the world's population – around 2 billion people – now use English

I DON'T THINK IT MEANS WHAT YOU THINK IT MEANS...

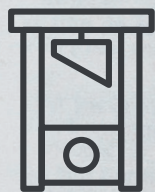
IMPROPER

In maths

An 'improper fraction' is when the nominator (upper number) is equal to or larger than the denominator (lower number).

In history

To break from accepted standards of behaviour



One word at a time

The word 'capital' is often taken for granted by pupils, as it's so ubiquitous – from the capital cities of geography, to the capital letters of English. The word derives from Latin, with the root '*caput*' meaning 'head'. Thus, just as we recognise the 'head' city of a country, so the 'head' of a sentence now becomes clear.

Exploring the root of 'capital' can reveal many helpful linguistic links. The word 'decapitation', for example, becomes more easily understood once you know that '*cap*' means 'head', and that the prefix '*de*' means 'down' – hence its literal meaning being the process of *taking someone's head off!*



Alex Quigley is a former teacher and the author of *Closing the Reading Gap* and *Closing the Vocabulary Gap*; he also works for the Education Endowment Foundation as National Content Manager