



Vocabulary and Reading in Secondary Schools (VaRiSS)

Dear Parent,

Recently, we wrote to you asking if you were happy for your child to take part in a study being conducted at the Institute of Education, University of Reading in which we are investigating oral vocabulary and reading development in secondary school. We are now contacting you again to see if your child would like to take part in an additional part of this study in which we will be teaching him or her some new words.

What is the study?

This part of the study is looking at how pupils learn new words in the context of two tasks. In one task, new words will be directly taught by a researcher. In the other task, pupils will be asked to read extended texts with new words in them and we will see how much information about the new words is learned.

Why are you doing this study?

We know from our previous work with secondary schools that there is great concern about language and literacy levels in secondary school, a time when learning increasingly depends on independent study. However, there is currently very little research in this area that involves pupils at secondary level, so the findings from this study will contribute considerably to the research knowledgebase, as well as having implications for teaching practice.

Why has my child been chosen to take part?

Your child has been invited to take part in the project because they are currently in Year 7 at XXX school.

Does my child have to take part?

It is entirely up to you and your child whether or not they participate. You or your child may also withdraw consent at any time during the project, without any repercussions, by contacting Nicky Dawson or Dr Jessie Ricketts using the addresses or numbers given below.

What will happen if my child does take part?

As you'll know from our previous letter, we are already visiting your child in school to assess oral vocabulary and reading development. For this part of the project, it is anticipated that we will see your child for between four and six additional 40-minute sessions so that they can complete our word learning tasks.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information you and your child give will remain confidential and will only be seen by the research team. Neither you, your child, nor the school will be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. Information about individuals will not be shared with the school and taking part (or not doing so) will not influence the grades your child receives at school. Participants in similar studies have found it interesting to take part. It is anticipated that the findings from this study will have implications for professionals working in the field of education by informing theories of reading and oral vocabulary development. In addition, it is hoped that insights that are gained will guide teaching and learning practices in school. If you agree to take part in the study, an electronic report summarising the findings can be sent to you at your request.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, your child, or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Participants will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the research team will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after five years. The results of the study may be presented at national and international conferences, and in written reports and articles.

What happens if I change my mind?

Should you wish to withdraw your consent for participation, you are free to do so at any point by contacting us using the details given at the end of this letter. Your child is also free to change his/her mind at any point during testing without repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard your child's data.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request. Furthermore, all researchers with access to the pupils' data have enhanced Criminal Records Bureau clearance.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely event of concern or complaint, you can contact Jessie Ricketts at the University of Reading by telephone on +44 (0)118 378 2796 or by email at j.ricketts@reading.ac.uk.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact either Nicky Dawson or Dr Jessie Ricketts using the addresses given below.

What should I do next?

We hope that you and your child will agree to participate in the study. Please discuss the project with your child. If you and your child are happy to take part then please complete the consent form on the next page and return it to the school office (reception) as soon as possible. Your child will also be given an information sheet to read.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jessie Ricketts and Nicky Dawson

Dr Jessie Ricketts	Nicky Dawson
Telephone: +44 (0)118 378 2796	Telephone: +44 (0)118 378 2635
Email: j.ricketts@reading.ac.uk	Email: n.j.dawson@reading.ac.uk
Address: Institute of Education London Road Campus 4 Redlands Road Reading, RG1 5EX	



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Consent Form

If you are happy for your child to take part please fill in the details below and return to the school office as soon as possible.

I give consent for my child to take part in the research.

The purposes of the project have been explained to me in the Information Sheet, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the information sheet in relation to the nature of the current study.

I understand that my child's participation is entirely voluntary and that we have the right to withdraw from the project at any time, without giving reason and without any repercussions.

Name of child: _____

Name of school: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post code: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____



Vocabulary and Reading in Secondary Schools (VaRiSS)

Dear Participant,

Recently, we visited you at school and completed some reading and vocabulary activities with you. We are now contacting you again to see if you would like to take part in an additional part of our project in which we will be teaching you some new words.

What is the study?

This part of the study is looking at how pupils learn new words in the context of two tasks. In one task, new words will be directly taught by a researcher. In the other task, pupils will be asked to read stories or articles with new words in them and we will see how much information about the new words is learned. We would like you to help us with the project and we have already made sure that your Head Teacher and parents are happy for you to help us.

Why are you doing this study?

Every day, as a secondary school pupil, you are required to use your reading and vocabulary skills in order to learn. At the moment, we know lots about reading and vocabulary in primary-school children, but very little about how these skills continue to develop as you move into secondary school. With your help, we want to find out more about the link between vocabulary and reading in secondary-school pupils, and how new words are learned, so that we can understand the best ways that teachers can help you learn.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been chosen to take part in the project because you are in Year 7.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you whether or not you decide to take part. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. You can also decide that you do not want to take part at any point during the project without any repercussions. Just let your teacher, your parents or us know.

What will happen if I do decide to take part?

We are already visiting you in school. For this part of the project, we would expect to see you for between four and six additional 40-minute sessions so that you can complete our word learning tasks.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information you give will remain confidential and will only be seen by the research team. Neither you nor your school will be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. Taking part will in no way influence the grades you receive at school and information about you will not be shared with the school. Participants in similar studies have found it interesting to take part. We hope that our research will help teachers to better support reading and language development in secondary school pupils. If you agree to take part in the study an electronic report summarising the findings can be sent to you if you wish.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Participants will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the research team will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after five years. The results of the study may be presented at national and international conferences, and in written reports and articles.

What happens if I change my mind?

Should you wish to withdraw your consent for participation, you are free to do so at any point by contacting us on the email addresses given at the end of this letter or by telling your parent or tutor. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard your data.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request. Furthermore, all researchers with access to the pupils' data have enhanced Criminal Records Bureau clearance.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely event of concern or complaint, you can contact Jessie Ricketts at the University of Reading by telephone on +44 (0)118 378 2796 or by email at j.ricketts@reading.ac.uk.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact either Nicky Dawson or the principal investigator Dr Jessie Ricketts using the addresses given below.

What should I do next?

We do hope that you will agree to participate in the study. If you are happy to take part you do not need to do anything. If, however, you **do not** wish to take part please let us know, or tell your parents or a teacher.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jessie Ricketts and Nicky Dawson

Dr Jessie Ricketts

Telephone: +44 (0)118 378 2796

Email: j.ricketts@reading.ac.uk

Nicky Dawson

Telephone: +44 (0)118 378 2635

Email: n.j.dawson@reading.ac.uk

Address: Institute of Education
London Road Campus
4 Redlands Road
Reading, RG1 5EX

Study Title: **Vocabulary and Reading in Secondary Schools – Word Learning**

Parent / Guardian Information Sheet

Dear Parent / Guardian,

You may remember in Year 7, you gave permission for your child to take part in a study looking at oral vocabulary and reading development in secondary school. Thank you for your and your child's ongoing support, we have recently completed the third year of data collection and are extremely grateful to all the pupils who took part. If you would like to know more about what we have found, please contact us and we will send you a summary as soon as it is available.

We are writing to you now as we are hoping to do one further task with the children who took part.

• **What is the study?**

This part of the study is looking at how pupils learn new words while they are reading. Learning new words while reading is important for vocabulary growth but is difficult so we are trying to find out how we can maximise the learning that occurs during reading.

• **Why has my child been chosen to take part?**

Your child has been invited to take part in the study as an extension of their previous involvement.

• **Does my child have to take part?**

It is entirely up to you and your child whether or not he or she participates. You or your child may also withdraw consent at any time during the project, without any repercussions, by contacting us using the contact details given below.

• **What will happen if my child does take part?**

If you agree for your child to take part, we will visit them at school in the autumn term for two sessions lasting between 45 and 60 minutes. During this time, they will complete a word learning task. This is an engaging task, using computerised presentation which students have previously found enjoyable and interesting.

• **What are the risks and benefits of taking part?**

The information you and your child give will remain confidential and will only be seen by the research team. Neither you, your child or the school will be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. Information about individuals will not be shared with the school and taking part (or not doing so) will not influence the grades your child receives at school. Participants in similar studies have found it interesting to take part. It is anticipated that the findings from this study will have implications for professionals working in the field of education by informing theories of reading and oral vocabulary development. In addition, it is hoped that insights that are gained will guide teaching and learning practices in school. If you agree to take part in the study, an electronic report summarising the findings can be sent to you at your request.

- **What will happen to the data?**

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you, your child or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Participants will be assigned a number and will be referred to by that number in all records. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only the research team will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed securely once the findings of the study are written up, after five years. The results of the study may be presented at national and international conferences, and in written reports and articles.

- **What happens if I change my mind?**

Should you wish to withdraw your consent for participation, you are free to do so at any point by contacting us using the details given at the end of this letter. Your child is also free to change his/her mind at any point during testing without repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard your child's data.

- **Who has reviewed the study?**

This project has been favourably reviewed following the procedures of the Royal Holloway Research Ethics Committee. Furthermore, all researchers with access to the pupils' data hold an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.

- **Where can I get more information?**

If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact Lucy Taylor or Dr Jessie Ricketts using the contact details given below.

- **What should I do next?**

We hope that you and your child will agree to participate in the study. Please discuss the study with your child. If you and your child are happy to take part, you do not need to do anything. If, however, either you or your child does not want to take part, please complete the consent form on the next page and return it the school office, or to us, as soon as possible. The study will be explained to your child prior to commencing any activity.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Taylor

Contact details

<i>Name</i>	<i>email</i>	<i>phone</i>
Dr Jessie Ricketts	jessie.ricketts@rhul.ac.uk	01784 414 623
Lucy Taylor	lucy.taylor@rhul.ac.uk	07900 552789

Research Study Title: **Vocabulary and Reading in Secondary Schools – Word Learning Study**

Parent / Guardian Consent Form (opt out)

RETURN ONLY IF YOU DO NOT WISH YOUR CHILD TO BE INCLUDED

- If you are happy for your child to take part you **DO NOT** need to complete this form.

If you do not wish your child to take part please fill in the details below and return to the school office by the end of term (22nd July).

- I **DO NOT** give consent for my child to take part in the research.

Name of child:

Name of school:

Name of parent / guardian:

Signature:

Date: