

Preamble

The glossary currently on offer on the Ministry's website in relation to the NZ Curriculum refresh for English years 0-6 is, I consider, a good indication that the current emphasis driving curriculum change is not knowledge rich but rather knowledge impoverished. Reading the glossary closely, I draw the following conclusions:

1. It concentrates on a narrow view of reading instruction.
2. Its metalinguistic scope is narrow and at times appears limited in its understanding.
3. There is a marked absence of a focus on whole-text considerations.
4. There is no reference to socio-cultural context and its relationship to reading and writing.
5. Its "grammar" is bottom-up rather than top-down and some crucial concepts related to reading and writing are simply absent.
6. There appears to be no recognition of the importance of pleasure and enjoyment.
7. There is little focus on literary texts.
8. There is little focus on spoken language.

I have taken the step of editing and enlarging the Ministry's glossary, which can be found below. Rows in Times Roman colour-coded yellow are my additions. Rows where I have put the Ministry's Ariel font in italics colour-coded green indicate that I have edited the text, either to enrich or amend the original.

Below I have listed some of the texts I have referred to in this revision.

Typically, a glossary is a resource constructed by a team of curriculum writers and reflects a wide range of expertise. (This is clearly not the case of the current MAG.) It inevitably reflects the theoretical and pedagogical priorities of the team. I suggest that we think of this glossary as an open-ended, dynamic text which is open to modification. If you have suggestions for it please send them to me at loketj98@gmail.com. Feel free to suggest references also. Let's see how we go. Our aim is openness and inclusion, rather than narrow, doctrinaire and exclusionary.

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References

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- Locke, T. (2015). *Developing writing teachers: Practical Ways for Teacher-Writers to Transform their Classroom Practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
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English Learning Area Years 0 - 6 glossary enriched

Abstract diction	Abstract diction denotes the language of ideas or concepts, for example, <i>fear</i> , <i>anxiety</i> or <i>ambition</i> . Abstract diction is used to generalise about things or make a case. In the sentence, <i>It is important to believe in yourself</i> , the words <i>important</i> and <i>believe</i> are abstract.
Argument	Argument refers to language that is being used to persuade, e.g. when one is making a case for a particular position.
Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)	Refers to various methods used to help individuals with speech or language difficulties communicate effectively. AAC includes both augmentative communication, which supplements existing speech, and alternative communication, which replaces speech when it is not possible.
Clause	A group of words that includes a subject and a verb. For example, in the sentence, “The baby cries when it is hungry”, “The baby cries” and “when it is hungry” are both clauses. The first one could stand alone as a sentence, so it’s an independent clause. The second one couldn’t stand alone, so it’s a dependent clause.
Code	<i>A system of signs that communicates meaning for a particular cultural group. For example, the code of written language in English.</i>
Cohesion	The grammatical term used to describe the way in which sentences clearly relate to each other in the context of a paragraph.
Complex sentences	Complex sentences contain one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. Dependent clauses often begin with subordinating conjunctions like “because,” “since,” “if,” “when,” or “although.”. For example: “I stayed home because it was raining.” Independent clause: “I stayed home.” Dependent clause: “because it was raining.”

Compound sentences	<p>Created when two or more independent clauses are joined using a conjunction (such as “and,” “but,” “or,” “nor,” “for,” “so,” or “yet”) or a punctuation mark (a semi-colon) to show a connection between two more ideas. Each independent clause in a compound sentence can stand alone as a complete sentence. For example:</p> <p>“I wanted to go for a walk, but it started to rain.”</p> <p>Independent clause one: “I wanted to go for a walk.”</p> <p>Independent clause two: “It started to rain.”</p> <p>Coordinating conjunction: “but”</p>
Comprehension monitoring	<p>Occurs when the reader (or listener) reflects on his or her own understanding. Comprehension monitoring is one of the skills needed for effective comprehension. Students do this from an early age.</p>
Concrete diction	<p>Concrete language is the language of sensuous experience and involves the use of imagery. When one describes or evokes one's experience in particular vivid detail, one tends to use concrete language. For example, <i>The warm, shingly sand oozed up between my bare toes.</i></p>
Connective	<p>A word used to combine other words, phrases, or clauses. For example, “and”, “by”, “then”. Connectives can be conjunctions, prepositions, or adverbs. They help to show the relationship between different parts of a sentence or between sentences. For example:</p> <p>Conjunctions: “and,” “but,” “or,” “because”</p> <p>Prepositions: “in addition to,” “besides”</p> <p>Adverbs: “however,” “therefore,” “meanwhile”</p>

Connotation	The connotation of a word is what it suggests for members of a particular group. Colours, for example, have different connotations for different groups. For Anglo-Saxon people, red connotes passion and anger. For Japanese people, it connotes authority, strength, sacrifice, joy, and happiness.
Consonant	<p>A basic speech sound in which the breath is at least partly obstructed, and it can be combined with a vowel to form a syllable. Consonants are produced by blocking or restricting airflow using parts of the mouth such as the tongue, lips, or teeth.</p> <p>For example, the sounds represented by the letters “b”, “d”, “k”, and “t” are consonants. Words are built from letters which are either vowels or consonants. English consonants are B, C, D, F, G, H, J, K, L, M, N, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y (sometimes), Z. Consonants need vowels to make up syllables and words.</p>
Consonant digraph	A combination of two or more consonants that, together, represent one sound. For example, “ch-” as in “chair” or “ph-” as in “phone”.
Context of culture	The broad cultural context within which a text is produced. All texts are creatures of time and place.
Context of situation	The immediate context that prompts a text-maker to produce a text. For example, a young person might choose to write a thank you letter to a grandparent after receiving a birthday gift.
Convention	<i>A convention is a customary usage associated with a particular genre or social situation. Conventions can relate to such textual features as diction, structure, typical content and level of formality.</i>
Decodable texts	Specially designed reading materials used in early literacy instruction. These texts are composed of words that align with the phonics skills students have been taught, allowing them to practice decoding words using their knowledge of letter-sound relationships.

Decoding strategies	<i>Strategies used by readers to work out (decode) unfamiliar words. For example, looking for known chunks, using knowledge of grapheme–phoneme relationships and seeking context cues (e.g. from illustrations). These strategies are essential for developing reading fluency and comprehension.</i>
Diction	Diction refers to the nature of the vocabulary a text uses (see abstract diction and concrete diction).
Digraph	Where two letters represent one sound (phoneme). For example, “-er” in her. This sound is different from the individual sounds of the letters when they are pronounced separately. Digraphs can be composed of either consonants or vowels.
Explanatory text (information text)	A type of non-fiction writing that explains how or why something happens. It provides a detailed description of a process, event, or concept, often answering questions like “how does this work?” or “why does this happen?”
Figures of sound	Figures of sound are features that utilise the sound quality of language for deliberate effects. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rhyme and half-rhyme • assonance: the repetition of identical vowels in proximity • alliteration: the repetition of identical consonants in proximity • onomatopoeia: words whose sounds echo their meanings, e.g. <i>hiss, drone</i> • synaesthesia: words whose sound suggests a connotative meaning, e.g. <i>slimy, frizzled</i>.
Fluency	Refers to the ability to express oneself easily and articulately. The ability to speak, read, or write rapidly and accurately, focusing on meaning and phrasing and without having to give attention to individual words or common forms and sequences of language. Fluency is essential in communication as it allows for clear and effective expression, whether in speaking, writing, and reading.
Function	The work a grammatical feature is doing as related to the purpose of the text maker and the intended audience.

Grapheme	The smallest unit of a written language, each usually represents one phoneme (“x” is an exception, as it represents two phonemes /k//s/).
Grammar	<p>A systematic way of describing how language functions in use:</p> <p>A bottom-up grammar starts with the smallest elements of language, e.g. graphemes, morphemes, and words and builds up to larger units such as sentences.</p> <p>A top-down grammar starts with the cultural context and context of situation and relates the functions of smaller units such as words and sentences to the social context of the text or utterance.</p>
Imagery	An image is a word or phrase that powerfully evokes sensuous experience (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell). A literal image denote an object actually present in the situation written about. A figurative image points to an object <i>not</i> in the literal (actual) situation but which has been connected by a writer with an object that <i>is</i> present, e.g. describing a flax frond as a "spear".
Inference	Inference when reading a text is the process of drawing conclusions or making educated guesses based on the information provided in the text, combined with the reader’s own knowledge and experiences. This process, often described as “reading between the lines” helps readers understand implied meanings, predict outcomes, and grasp deeper insights that are not explicitly stated.
Information text (explanatory text)	A type of non-fiction writing that explains how or why something happens. It provides a detailed description of a process, event, or concept, often answering questions like “how does this work?” or “why does this happen?”
Interpretation	The process of assigning meaning or significance to elements within a text based on a student’s understanding, analysis, and personal insights. It involves making connections between various aspects such as characters, events, dialogue, and symbolism to uncover deeper meanings and themes.
Language features	<i>Specific techniques used in writing and speech to achieve one's purposes with a particular audience. These features function, for example, to argue a case, relate a chain of events, evoke emotion and communicate a place.</i>

Literacy	<i>The ability to read, write, speak, and listen in a way that allows individuals to communicate effectively and understand the world around them. It encompasses a range of skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Beyond these basic skills, literacy also includes the ability to use language to solve problems, access information and engage in lifelong learning. Literacy also extends to an enjoyment and appreciation of language as a means of aesthetic expression.</i>
Literary texts	<p><i>A literary text is characterized by the following qualities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The use of language to please, where the aesthetic function is primary and draws attention to itself;</i> • <i>A focus on formal organization and coherence;</i> • <i>The evocation of a fictive or imaginary world which exists in a tangential relationship to the experiential world.</i> <p><i>The linguistic mode for a literary text can be oral, verbal, visual or multimodal.</i></p> <p><i>The following text-types (or genres) are straightforwardly literary: novel, lyric poem, narrative poem, folk-tale, parable, fable, tall story, mythic tale, stage play, song lyric, epic, film drama.</i></p> <p><i>The following text-types (or genres) can be literary: diary, essay, travel story, “fictive” journalism, feature articles, oratory.</i></p>
Meaning making	<i>Using personal and cultural knowledge, linguistic and other textual cues, and contextual awareness to derive or convey meaning when listening, speaking, reading, or writing; this requires an understanding of the forms and purposes of different text-types and an awareness that texts are intended for an audience.</i>
Metacognition	Involves being aware of and understanding their own thought processes, which helps them plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning strategies. Linked to the science of learning, this self-awareness enhances their ability to retain information and solve problems.
Metalanguage	A technical language for talking about language – grammar in its widest sense.

Metaphor	A metaphor occurs when a literal object is identified with a figurative object (a word or image from another context), e.g. "She directed an icy glance in my direction."
Minor sentence	A minor sentence is an incomplete sentence (e.g. lacking a complete verb or subject) that still conveys meaning. A famous example is the beginning of Charles Dickens' novel <i>Bleak House</i> , with sentences such as: "Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers."
Mode	Refers to the various forms and methods through which literacy is expressed and communicated. They are essential for developing comprehensive literacy skills, enabling individuals to effectively communicate and understand information in various contexts. These modes encompass a wide range of communication methods, including: Reading: Understanding and interpreting written text. Writing: Expressing thoughts and ideas in written form. Speaking: Articulating thoughts and ideas verbally.
	Listening: Comprehending and interpreting spoken language. Viewing: Interpreting and making meaning from visual texts, such as images, videos, and diagrams. Presenting: Using visual or multimedia elements to convey information or tell a story through drama or digital media.
Morphological knowledge	An understanding of morphemes, the smallest units of meaning in a language, which can be prefixes, suffixes, or root words. This knowledge is crucial for reading, spelling, and vocabulary development.
Multimodal text	Multimodal texts combine two or more modes of communication to convey a message. These modes can include written words, images, videos, sounds and digital images. Examples of multimodal texts include picture books, websites, infographics, videos, and digital presentations.

Narrative text	A type of writing that tells a story or describes a sequence of events. The primary purpose of narrative texts is to entertain or inform the reader by presenting a coherent and engaging story. Organised around events and literacy elements such as setting, characters, and a problem/solution. For example, diary, biography/autobiography, personal narrative, fable/myth/legend/fairytale, poem, play.
Orthographic mapping	The cognitive process through which a word is permanently stored in memory for instant and effortless recall. Orthographic mapping is crucial for developing fluent reading skills. It enables readers to recognise words automatically without needing to sound them out each time, which frees up cognitive resources for comprehension and higher-order thinking. Key aspects of orthographic mapping include: Letter-sound connections: Readers map the sounds they hear in a word to the letters they see. Pronunciation and spelling: The pronunciation of a word is linked to its spelling, allowing for quick recognition. Meaning: The meaning of the word is also stored, making it easier to understand and use in context.
Paragraph	A paragraph is a series of sentences that are organized and coherent, and are all related to a single topic. A paragraph in a poem is called a stanza .
Personification	A figurative expression where a non-human, literal object is given human characteristics, e.g. "Defeat stared him in the face."
Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound in a language that can distinguish one word from another. For example, the sounds represented by the letters, "p," "b," "d" and " t" are phonemes because they differentiate words like "pad," "bad," and "bat".
Phoneme-grapheme correspondence	Refers to the relationship between phonemes (the smallest units of sound in a language) and graphemes (the letters or groups of letters that represent those sounds in written form). This concept is fundamental in phonics, developing students' ability to hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes and understand their corresponding graphemes.
Phonemic awareness	An overall understanding of the sound systems of a language. For example, an awareness that words are made up of combinations of sounds.

Phonics	The knowledge of how phonemes can be represented by graphemes. It links phonological awareness (the ability to hear and work with spoken words, parts of words, and individual sounds) with written language.
Phrase	<i>A group of words within a sentence that makes sense but does not contain a finite verb. For example, a noun phrase is built around a noun, e.g. "all the boisterous young dogs in the street".</i>
Prosodic features	The collective term used to describe variations in pitch, loudness, stress, tempo and rhythm in spoken language. Intonation is a combination of pitch patterns and stress. Intonation patterns differ from language to language. Learners of English as an additional language can have difficulty in understanding the meaning English speakers may be communicating through a particular intonation pattern.
Rhetoric	The art of making language work for you. A rhetorical grammar is focused on the way a text-maker chooses certain features to achieve a certain purpose with an intended audience.
Rhythm	All languages have their own special way of using rhythm in spoken language. Rhythm in English is produced by the combination of tempo and syllabic stress.
Syntax	The branch of grammar concerned with the way words become ordered into larger groupings such as phrases, clauses and sentences
Simple sentence	<i>A simple sentence consists of a single independent clause with no dependent clauses. Simple sentences are the building blocks of more complex sentence structures and are essential for clear and concise communication.</i>
Self-regulation	The ability to understand and manage behaviour, emotions, and reactions to various situations. This skill helps children focus on tasks, control impulses, and interact positively with others, all of which are essential for learning and social development.

Sign	<p>There are three kinds of sign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icon: the sign resembles its object in some way, as in road signs. • Index: the meaning here is based on association, e.g. graffiti as a sign might be associated with anti-social behaviour, • Symbol: where the meaning (or signification) is conventional, e.g. a rose as signifying love. The words of a language are symbolic.
Simile	A figurative expression where the literal object is compared to the figurative object through the use of <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> , e.g. "She ran like a cheetah."
Structure	Structure refers to the relationship of components to one another within a whole text. The structure of a text organizes the content in a meaningful way and contributes to textual meaning.
Summarising texts	Involves condensing the main ideas and key points of a longer text into a shorter version, using your own words. This process helps to provide a clear and concise overview of the original content without including unnecessary details.
Syllable	A single, unbroken vowel sound within a spoken word. They typically contain a vowel sound and perhaps one or more accompanying consonants. All words are made from at least one syllable. Syllables are sometimes referred to as the 'beats' of a word that form its rhythm, and breaking a word into syllables can help English learners with phonetic spelling.
Syntax	<i>The rules followed to arrange words and phrases to create logical and grammatically correct clauses and sentences. It involves the rules that govern the structure of sentences, including word order, sentence structure, and the relationship between words.</i>
Systematic synthetic phonics	A method of teaching reading that emphasizes the relationship between letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes) in a structured and sequential manner. The 'synthetic' name comes from the synthesising or blending of sounds to make a word and enable children to read.

Split digraph	A vowel digraph which has been split up by another letter. For example: a-e as in “cake” i-e as in “five” o-e as in “code” e-e as in “sphere” u-e as in “rule”
Taonga tuku iho	Something handed down, a cultural property or heritage.
Text	<i>Any artifact or event utilising signs (e.g., a speech, poem, poster, video clip, advertisement, dress, gesture) that can be read.</i>
Text type	A particular kind of text with features and conventions linked to its purpose. For example, oral texts are spoken forms of communication, like speeches and conversations, while written texts are conveyed through writing, such as books and articles. Digital texts, created and accessed using technology, often include interactive elements like audio and video.
Text creator	An individual or group who creates texts in any mode and using any technology.
Transcription	Describes the act of converting spoken language into written form on the page or screen.
Trigraph	A cluster of three letters that collectively produce a specific single sound. It can be composed entirely of consonants or vowels, or it can be a mix of both.
Vowel	Words are built from letters which are either vowels or consonants. Vowels are A, E, I, O, U and sometimes Y. All syllables include vowels.
Vowel team	A spelling pattern where two or more letters are used to represent a single vowel sound.

Word class

Word classes, also known as parts of speech, name the different categories of words found in descriptive grammars. There are two categories of word class: **content words** communicate information; **function words** are necessary link words (the glue that holds sentences together). Content words are nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs of manner (e.g. “forcefully”). Function words include verb auxiliaries, prepositions, articles, conjunctions, pronouns and other adverbs (e.g. “however”, “later”)