Science Vocabulary Progression

Vocabulary has been deliberately reduced to the most important disciplinary and substantive concepts that children need to understand and revisit. This is not an exhaustive list of all vocabulary taught in science lessons, but the core vocabulary children are expected to retain and use confidently as they progress through the curriculum.

	Nursery	Reception	Year 1 (A)	Year 2 (B)	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Working Scientifically	look, touch, change	sort, group, question	observe, compare, measure, temperature	prediction, data, bar chart, pictogram	conclusion, evaluation, thermometer, stopwatch, classification key	classify, line graph, microscope, volume	accuracy, anomaly, independent variable, dependent variable, controlled variable	precision, correlation, evidence, theory
Animals Including Humans (Biology)	body, head, eyes, ears	Healthy, exercise, grow	human, senses, mammal, bird, fish, reptile, amphibian, carnivore, herbivore, omnivore	offspring, life cycle, exercise, hygiene, healthy diet, nutrition	skeleton, muscles, joint, vertebrate, invertebrate	incisors, canines, molars, digestive system, oesophagus, stomach, intestine	life cycle, reproduction, puberty, gestation, foetus	circulatory system, heart, blood vessels, arteries, veins, capillaries, oxygenated / deoxygenated blood
Plants (Biology)	plant, flower, leaf	root, stem, seed	plant, flower, leaf, stem, root, seed, deciduous, evergreen	bulb, shoot, sunlight, compost, growth	germination, pollination, pollen, seed dispersal, seedling, water transportation			

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Everyday Materials / Properties and Changes of Materials (Physics)	hard, soft, rough, smooth	wood, metal, plastic, glass	material, glass, waterproof, transparent, opaque	natural, human-made, flexible, rigid, absorbent, recyclable			soluble, insoluble, solution, mixture, reversible change, irreversible change, conductor, insulator	
Seasonal Changes (Physics)	hot, cold, rain, sun	season, weather	autumn, winter, spring, summer, day, night, daylight, rainfall, rain gauge, rainy, snowy, windy, cloudy, frosty, sunny					
Living Things and Their Habitats (Biology)	animal, bug, home	living, habitat		microhabitat, food chain, living, dead, never alive		vertebrate, invertebrate, flowering plant, non-flowering plant, classification	life cycle, metamorphosis, fertilisation, sexual reproduction, asexual reproduction	organism, microorganism, bacteria, fungi, virus, characteristics

Science Vocabulary Progression

Rocks (Chemistry)	stone	rock, soil			rock, fossil, soil, granite, sandstone, chalk, weathering, fossilisation			
Light (Physics)	light, dark	shadow, Sun			light source, Sun, reflection, shadow			pupil, iris, retina, lens, refraction, prism, rainbow, spectrum, solar eclipse
Forces and Magnets (Physics)	push, pull	force			push, pull, force, friction, magnet, magnetic, poles, attract, repel		air resistance, water resistance, gravity, weight, lever, gear, pulley, machine, streamlined	
States of Matter (Chemistry)	wet, dry	ice, water				solid, liquid, gas, melting, freezing, evaporation, condensation, water cycle		

Science Vocabulary Progression

Sound (Physics)	loud, quiet	sound, vibration				sound, vibration, volume, pitch, ear drum, ear canal, cochlea, high-pitched, low-pitched		
Electricity (Physics)	on, off	battery, switch				appliance, cell, battery, circuit, switch, conductor, insulator, buzzer		series circuit, voltage, current, complete circuit
Earth and Space (Physics)	day, night	Earth, Moon					Solar System, Sun, planet, Earth, Moon, orbit, rotate, axis, day, night, gravity, satellite,	
Evolution and Inheritance (Biology)								variation, species, inheritance, adaptation, evolution, natural selection, common ancestor, palaeontologist, Charles Darwin, Mary Anning