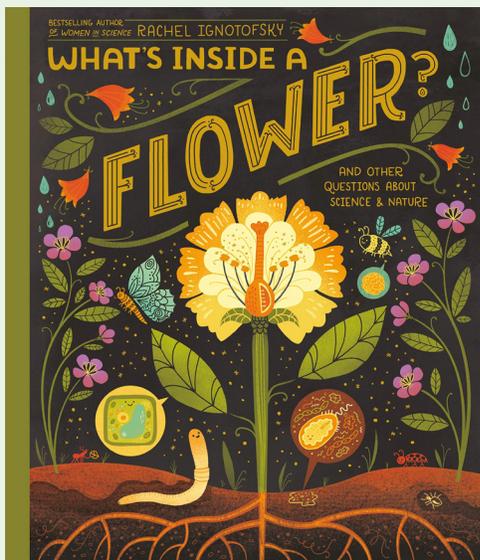


# Book Nook

This month's Book Nook topic is...



## Introducing Rare Vocabulary with *What's Inside a Flower?*

Growing your child's vocabulary is key to helping her develop **emergent literacy skills** – the building blocks for learning to read and write. This is because the more words your child knows and understands, the easier it will be for her to understand the stories she hears (and eventually read on her own). In this Book Nook, we'll look at some helpful strategies to introduce and explain **rare words** to your child.

### What are rare words?

Rare words are specialized words that are associated with specific subject areas. For example, if you were learning about clouds, you might come across rare words like “nimbus” or “cumulus”, and if you were learning about animals, you may come across “herbivore” and “carnivore”. These words don't usually come up in daily conversations but are often found in information books. These words help expand your child's general knowledge.

#### The Book:

*What's Inside a Flower?* Written and illustrated by Rachel Ignotofsky

## Why we picked it

This beautifully illustrated non-fiction book contains many rare words about flowers and plant development. If you have a child who is interested in how flowers grow, she is sure to love this book.

Many of the rare words in the book are accompanied by simple explanations which is helpful when you're trying to introduce new words and concepts. For example, the author writes "Plants turn sunlight into food in a process called photosynthesis." She also includes whimsical illustrations that help bring the ideas to life.

## The strategy: Shoot for the SStARS

At The Hanen Centre, we talk about making new words "sparkle", or stand out, by using a strategy called "Shoot for the SStARS". It's an acronym that stands for: **S**tress, **S**how, **T**ell and **R**elate, and **S**ay it again. When you use each part of **Shoot for the SStARS**, you deepen your child's understanding of new words and make it more likely she will remember them and use them on her own when she is ready.

Let's shoot for the SStARS with "**photosynthesis**."

## Stress

Make **photosynthesis** stand out from the other words by saying it louder and slower than the rest of the text. You can also pause before and after saying the word.

## Show

You can show what a word means in a variety of ways – the easiest of which is using the illustrations in the book. For example, you can show **photosynthesis** by pointing to the picture in the book where the sun is beaming down on the leaf.

## Tell

Give your child a short definition of the word **photosynthesis**. You could say, “**Photosynthesis** is when a plant turns sunlight into food.”

## Relate

Relating the new word to other ideas or experiences is extremely important. This will help your child associate the word with other situations and will make the word much more relevant to her. Relate this word to other experiences by saying things like, “You know how we eat food so our bodies have energy to grow big and strong? Well, instead of eating, plants use **photosynthesis**, and instead of food, plants use sunshine, water and minerals to grow.”

## Say it again...!

This is an essential step you can't forget! It's very important to repeat the word again, in two ways:

- **Re-reading the book** – *What's Inside a Flower* has so many so many interesting facts about plants that your child will likely want to read it again and again, giving her many opportunities to hear the word again.
- **Saying the word again in other situations** – For example, if you are out on a walk on a sunny day and see a plant in bloom, you could say, “That flower is using **photosynthesis** to turn all of this sunshine into food.”

## The first time you read the book

Introduce new vocabulary words by **Stressing**, **Showing**, and **Telling** the words. Try to keep your explanations short so that you don't interrupt the flow of the book

## The second time you read the book

Continue to emphasize the vocabulary that you introduced the first time you read the book, only this time, offer more explanation about the concept of **photosynthesis**. You can also use the second reading to **relate** this word to your child's knowledge and past experiences

## The third time you read the book

Now that your child has an understanding of **photosynthesis**, consider shooting for the SSTaRS with other rare vocabulary words in the book.

Try to make a point of using **photosynthesis** (and other new vocabulary words) during everyday conversations. You may be surprised to hear your child use the rare vocabulary word on his own!

Happy reading!