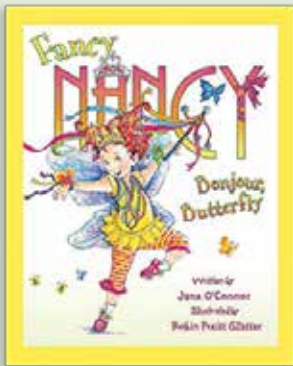


# Book Nook

This month's Book Nook topic is...



## Building Vocabulary with with *Fancy Nancy: Bonjour, Butterfly*

Studies show that the larger a child's vocabulary when she starts school, the better her reading comprehension will be later. In this Book Nook, I'll share some helpful tips for how to introduce new words to your child.

*Let's get started!*

### The Book:

*Fancy Nancy: Bonjour, Butterfly* written by Jane O'Connor, Illustrated by Robin Preiss Glasser

### Why I picked it:

*Fancy Nancy* is a series of books about a little girl, Nancy, who likes everything to be fancy, including her vocabulary. This means that on almost every page there is a rare or uncommon word, which makes the series ideal for introducing higher level vocabulary.

Many of the rare words are introduced with an easier-to-understand synonym, which is helpful when you're trying to explain a new word. For example, she'll say "exquisite is a fancy word for beautiful".

I chose this book in the series, *Bonjour, Butterfly*, because many children can relate to the problem of wanting to do one thing, but having to do another. Nancy is forced to miss her best friend's birthday party to attend her grandparents' anniversary celebration.

### Why introduce new vocabulary?

Vocabulary is an essential element of emergent literacy. The more words a preschooler understands, the better her reading comprehension will be. But, just exposing your child to new words is not enough. We must take the time explain those words to help your child truly understand what a word means.

## Picking appropriate words

Once your child understands basic, everyday words (such as “blue”, “special”, “pretty”, etc), we want to start “stepping up” her vocabulary by introducing less frequently occurring words (think of “azure”, “extraordinary”, “exquisite”). Ideal words are those that:

- can be used frequently in many different situations
- can be related to your child’s life

Books are a great source for new vocabulary, because they often contain words we don’t use every day and because the context of the story can help explain new words. Introducing those words to your child as you encounter them in books will help build her vocabulary and will help her understand more of the story.

A word that appears in *Bonjour, Butterfly* is **furious**. This is a more sophisticated word than angry or mad, and most preschoolers can probably relate to feeling furious.

## Shoot for the SSTaRS

In our *ABC and Beyond* and *I’m Ready!* guidebooks, 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. Let’s shoot for the SSTaRS with “**furious**”.

### Stress

Make **furious** 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

Show what a word means in a variety of ways – the easiest of which is using the illustrations in the book. Several of the pictures in the book show Nancy scowling, and sulking, and looking angry. You can also show the meaning of **furious** by using gestures, facial expression and even changing your tone of voice.

### Tell

Give a short definition of the word. One of the benefits of the *Fancy Nancy* series is that they often explain the sophisticated words that they use. For example, in this book, the author writes “Mad is way too plain for how I feel. I am furious!” So, right in the text, you have an explanation. Point that out to your child when you read the story.

### and Relate

Relate the new vocabulary words to other concepts or experiences. 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 “Remember when you couldn’t have dessert and you were **furious**?” Or “What makes you **furious**?” You might also want to share your own experiences of being **furious**.

### Say it again...!

Repeat the word by re-reading the book, and saying the word again in other situations. *Fancy Nancy: Bonjour, Butterfly* is a book that lends itself very well to being re-read because there are so many rare words, and the story is very heart-warming. Use this to your advantage, and shoot for the SSTaRS with **furious** and other rare words every time you read.

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## Shoot for the SSTaRS *Con't*

You can also repeat **furious** in new contexts. For example, if you see another child having a temper tantrum at the grocery store you could say, "Look, that boy is furious because he's not getting what he wants."

### The first time you read the book:

Introduce new vocabulary words by Stressing, Showing, Telling and Relating the word. Try to keep your explanations short so that you don't interrupt the flow of the book, or take away from the overall storyline.

### The second time you read the book:

Now that your child has heard the whole story, you can go deeper into your conversation about **furious**. This is a great opportunity to further relate the word to your child's experiences and talk about those experiences in more depth.

You can also stress, show and tell other rare words in the book like **gorgeous** or **extraordinary**.

### The third time you read the book:

Perhaps you can relate the word to other experiences, or situations, or you could act out a scenario where one of you is **furious**. Also, make sure to continue introducing other rare or new words to the child.

Make a point of using the new word during everyday conversations – that's going to help your child use the word herself. You'll know it's working when, one day, your child says, "If you don't let me eat dessert, I'll be *furious*!"

I'd love to hear which books you use to build vocabulary. Please [send me your feedback](#).



### A little more about me

I'm a Speech-Language Pathologist working at The Hanen Centre as a Program Specialist. I combine my background in language and literacy development with my knowledge of adult learning to offer evidence-based face to face and online trainings to early childhood educators, SLPs and parents.

The Book Nook combines my passion for children's literature with my knowledge of language and literacy development. I hope you enjoy it!

**Tamara**