



Reading and Vocabulary

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**UNIVERSITY
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**The
Guardian**

Plan



- Context
- Objectives
- Methods
- Key Findings
- Implications

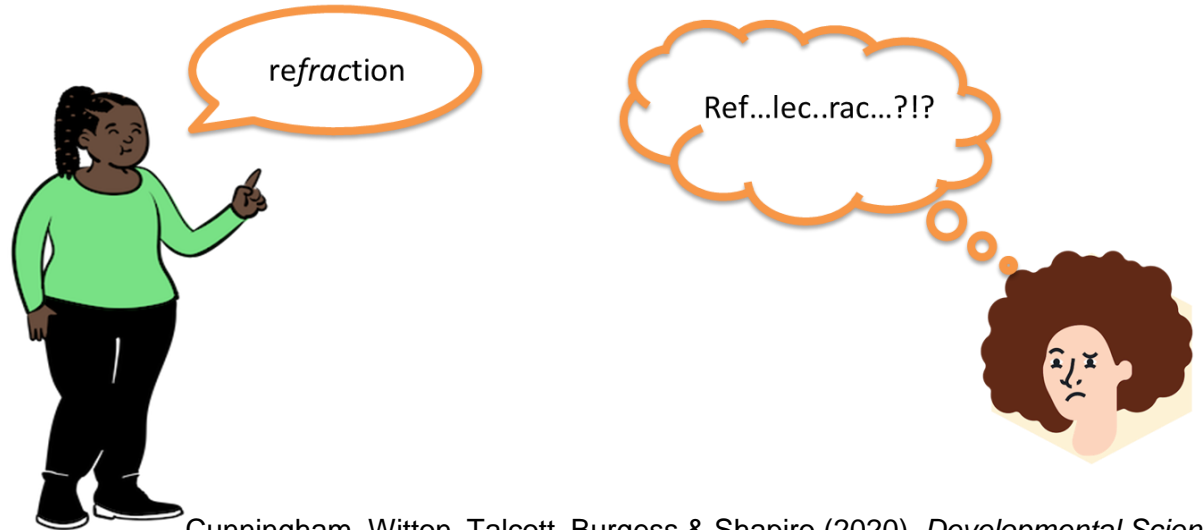
Context



- Limited vocabulary knowledge is a barrier to learning (Oxford Language Report, 2018, 2020).
 - **Can reading can be harnessed to promote vocabulary knowledge?**
- Academic decline as students move from primary to secondary school (Deignan, 2022).
 - **Does growth in reading and vocabulary slow during transition?**

Why Reading and Vocabulary?

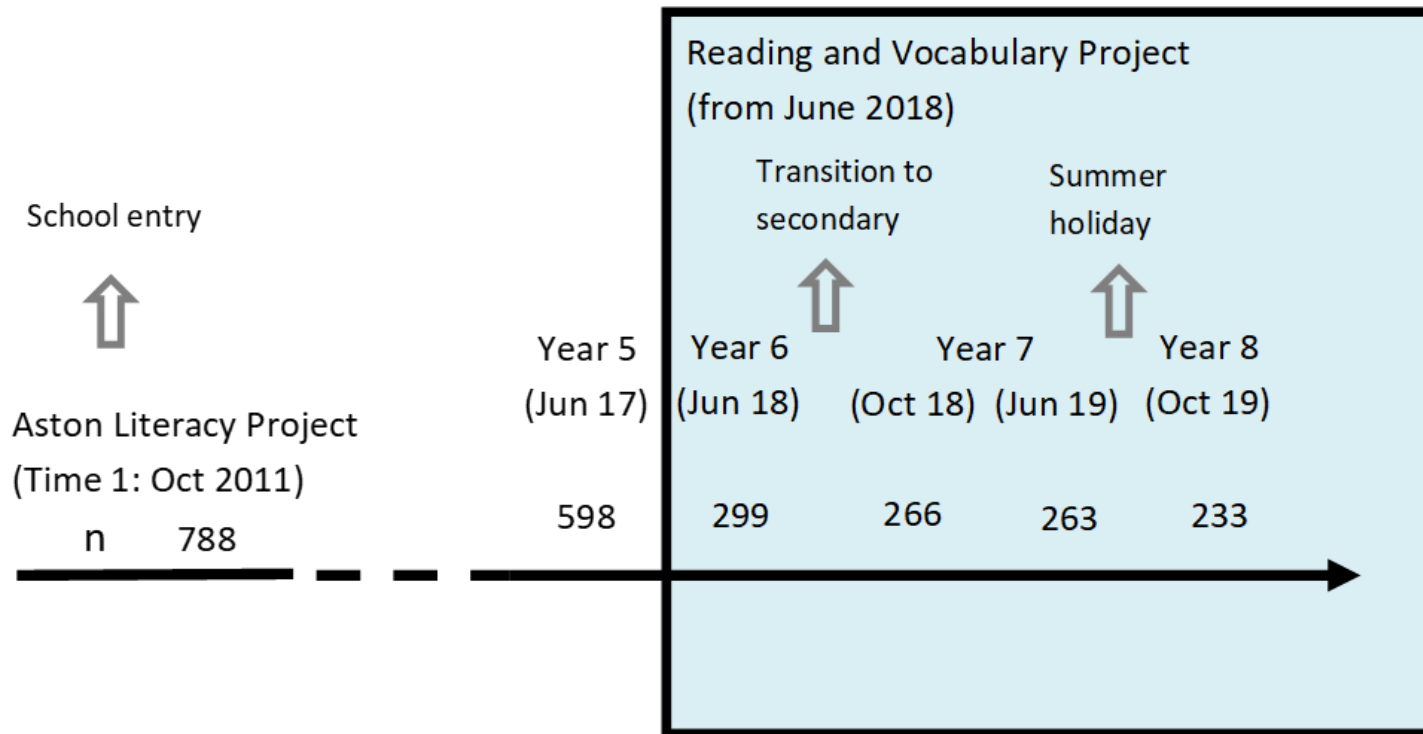
- **Leisure reading:** access to rich and diverse vocabulary through “book language” (Nation et al., 2022)
- **Reading Proficiency:** helps you process and recall new words (Cunningham et al., 2020)



Objectives

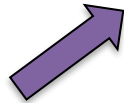
- **Objective 1. The triad: Reading proficiency, leisure reading and vocabulary.**
- **Objective 2. Harnessing leisure reading.**
- **Objective 3. Transition and socioeconomic status (SES).**

Methods: O1 and O3



Objective 1: key findings

More proficient readers
read more books



Which enhances vocabulary



More able readers are better at learning new words



Objective 2: Method

Stage 1: Pre-test

- Test knowledge of book-specific vocabulary items

Stage 2: Practice diary and drop-in session

- 4-day SMS diary

Stage 3: Reading phase

- Students given access to 4 books over 10 weeks
- Experimental group complete reading diary and set goals

Stage 4: Post-test

- Test knowledge of book-specific vocabulary items after the 10 week period
- 4-day reading diary to capture increases in reading



Objective 2: key findings

- When adolescents read real books because they choose to, in their own time, the *quantity* of leisure-reading is linked to vocabulary growth.



tempest....



...tempest....



.....tempest....



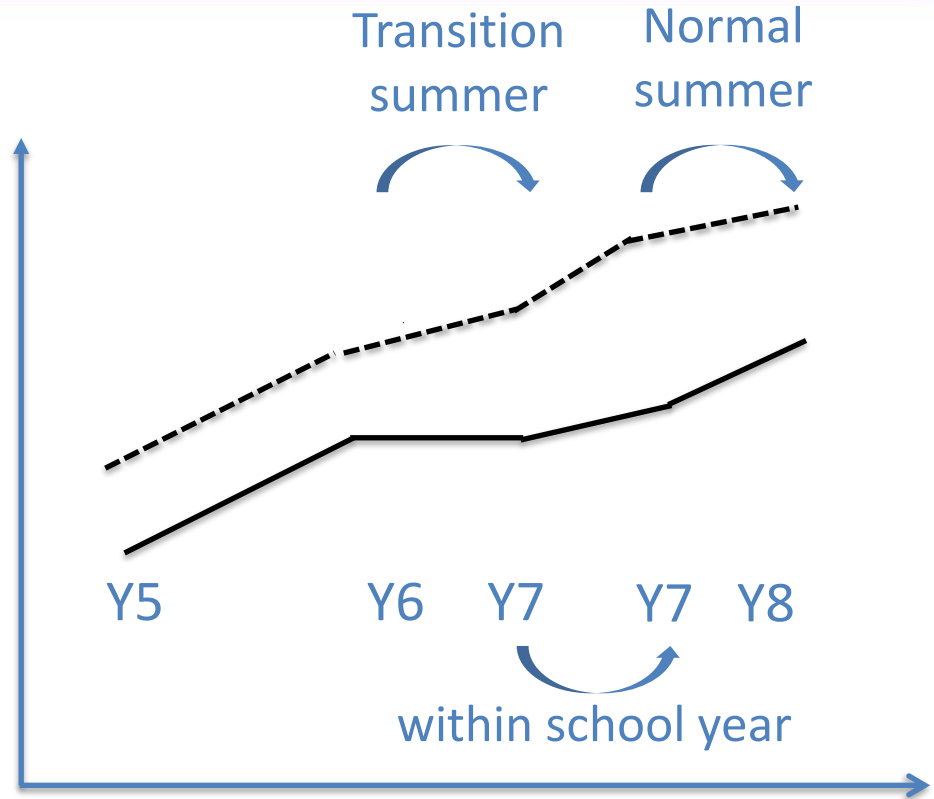
- BUT Despite developing an attractive tool with input from experts and teenagers, few participants completed the diary consistently.

Objective 3: Predictions

*Predicted findings:
Slower growth during
transition? Especially
for low SES?*

----- High SES

———— Low SES

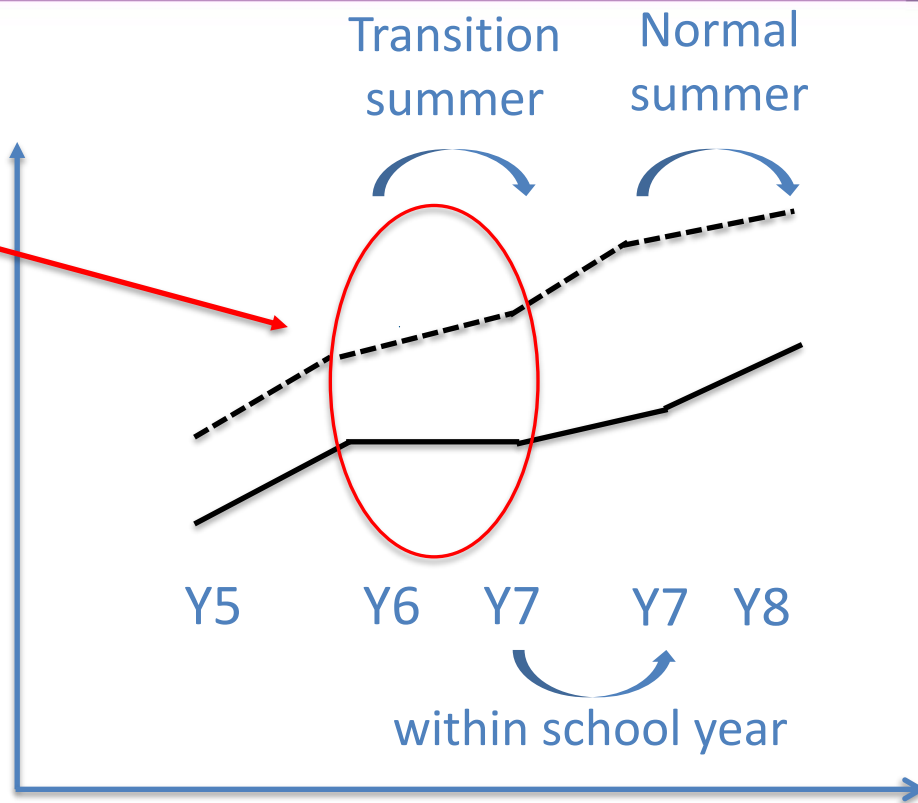


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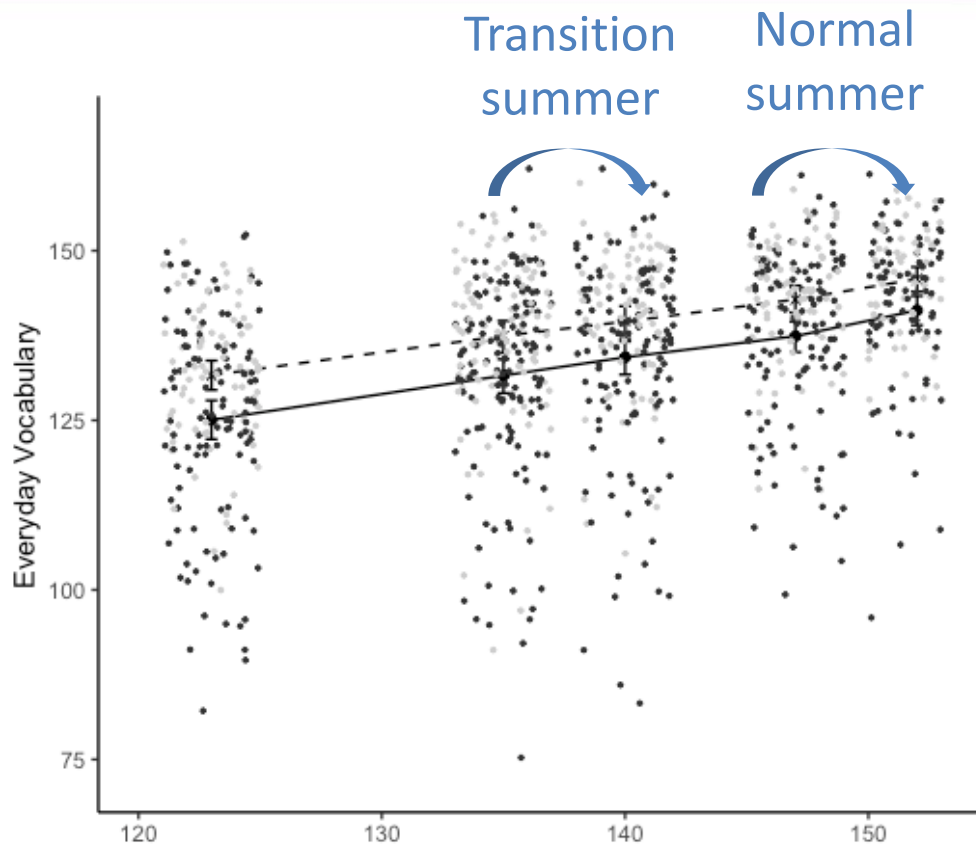
Objective 3: Key Findings

Everyday Vocabulary:

- Persistent effect of SES
- NO slowing of growth

----- High SES

———— Low SES



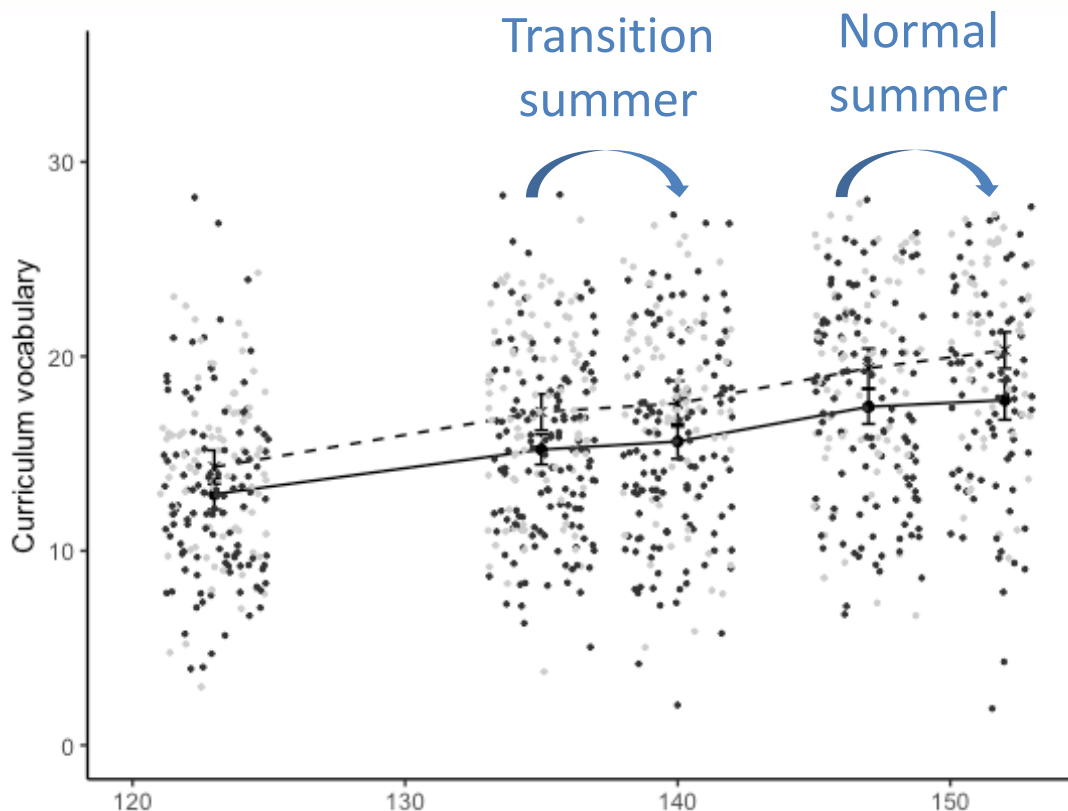
Objective 3: Key Findings

Curriculum Vocabulary:

- Persistent effect of SES
- Slower growth during summer (transition and non-transition)

----- High SES

———— Low SES



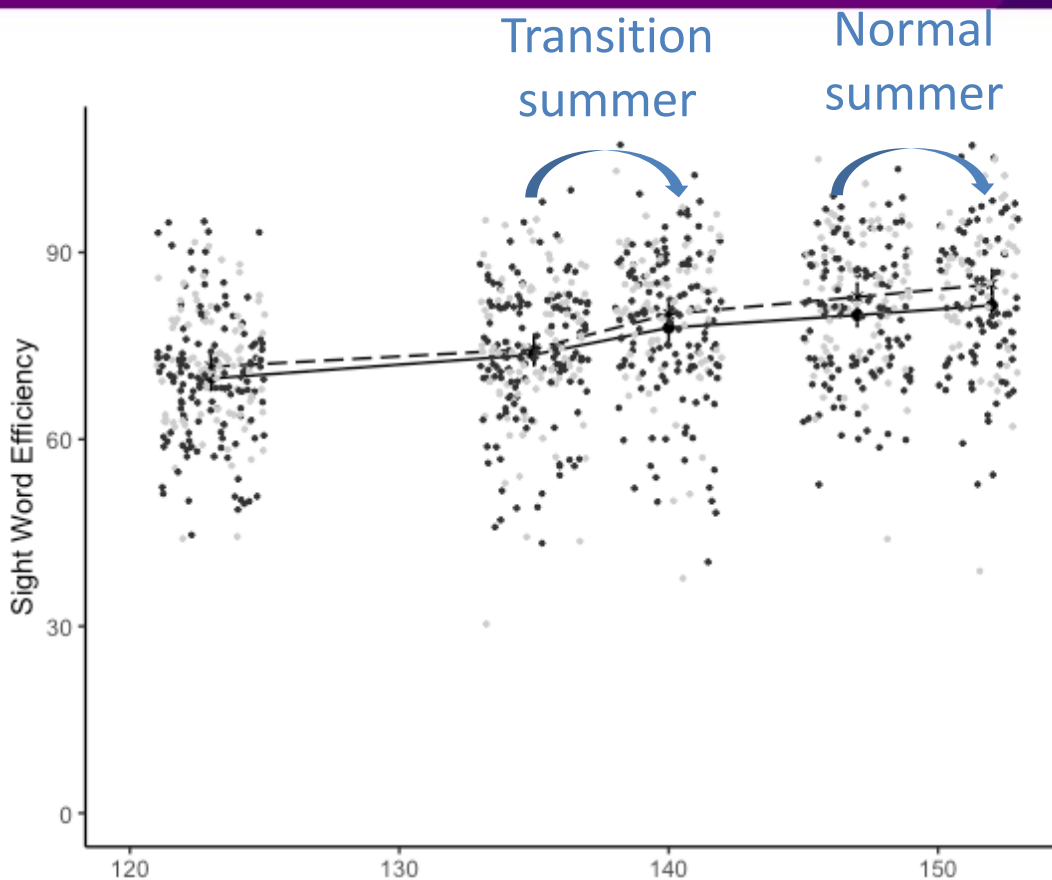
Objective 3: Key Findings

Word Reading Proficiency:

- NO effect of SES
- NO slowing of growth

----- High SES

———— Low SES



Implications (1/3): Reading Proficiency

- **Word reading proficiency is a key driver of vocabulary knowledge.** Children who read below expected levels will struggle to learn at secondary school.
- **Recommended actions:** screening and diagnostic assessments to identify reading needs in secondary school students (word reading proficiency, reading comprehension or both). Targeted support and interventions carefully aligned with reading needs.



Implications (2/3): Leisure Reading

- Leisure-reading promotes vocabulary knowledge.
- **Recommended actions:** focus on increasing reading motivation and activity, as well as improving reading skills.
- We also highlighted the challenges in developing accessible ways to increase reading-need *co-designed programmes developed with teenagers and teachers.*



Implications (3/3): Jump, not Slump

- **Transition to secondary school brings new challenges.**
- **Recommended actions:** Monitoring and targeted support are key to creating a smooth transition – good vocabulary knowledge and reading are needed to access curriculum.
- Transition to secondary school is about adapting to a new environment, with a **jump in demands, not a slump in students' knowledge and skills.**



Thank you

All teachers, participants and families

Jessie Ricketts, Sanne van der Kleij, Adrian Burgess

Many research assistants!

<https://bit.ly/AstonLiteracyProjectTeam>

<https://lara.psychologyresearch.co.uk>



Publications

O1: van der Kleij, S. W., Burgess, A. P., Ricketts, J., & Shapiro, L. R. (2022). From Bibliophile to Sesquipedalian: Modeling the Role of Reading Experience in Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 1-13.
doi:10.1080/10888438.2022.2068418

O2: van der Kleij, Groenhoej, Vousden, Burgess, Shapiro & Ricketts (2023b). Can reading for pleasure support vocabulary learning? A naturalistic experiment. Stage 1 Registered Report accepted in *Scientific Studies of Reading*. Stage 2 submission 2023.

O3: van der Kleij, S. W., Burgess, A. P., Ricketts, J., & Shapiro, L. R. (2023). Tracking vocabulary and reading growth in children from lower and higher socioeconomic backgrounds during the transition from primary to secondary education. *Child development*, 94(n/a), e57-e66. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13862>