

How to use VCOP to  
make a big impact on improving  
pupil  
progress in writing.

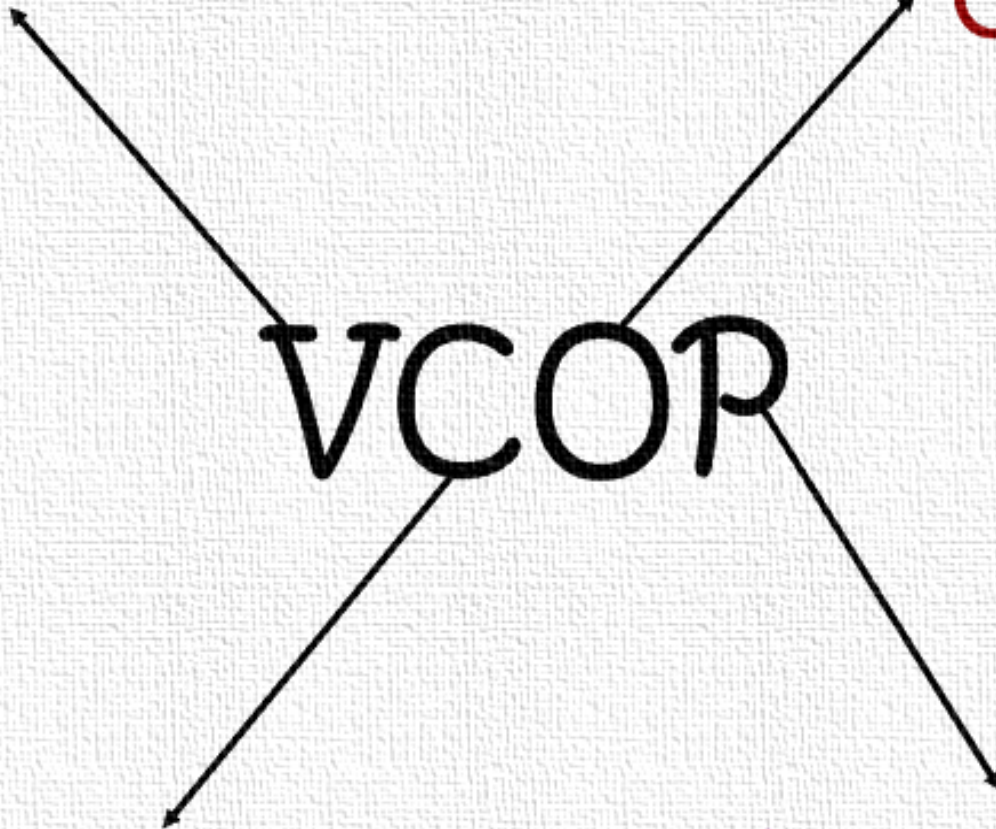
Vocabulary

(Power)  
Openers

VCOP

Punctuation

Connectives



# Vocabulary

'Wow' words...

Powerful nouns *names of things*

Powerful verbs *doing words*

Powerful adjectives *describing words*

Powerful adverbs *add to the verb to give extra detail (-ly words)*

Wow word wall - *collect ideas from texts/pupil work*

Similes *something is 'like' something*

Metaphors *something is described as if it really is something else*

Personification *thing behaves like a 'person' or 'creature'*

Alliteration *same initial letter sound*

Onomatopoeia *words that make the sound they say*

Vary word choice *choose interesting synonyms - don't repeat same words*

I-spy-magpie - Words don't belong to anyone - *steal other people's ideas*

# Connectives

In early writing, children will write in short, simple sentences. To further develop this, pupils need to join up the smaller sentences with connectives. Connectives *glue* small sentences together.

The dog barked. Joe looked out of the window. There was nobody out there. He felt uneasy. Something wasn't quite right. He just didn't know what.

*How might you connect some of these sentences?*

The dog barked. Joe looked out of the window **but** there was nobody out there. He felt uneasy **because** something wasn't quite right **and** he just didn't know what.

## Stages in using connectives

- Simple sentences connected with **and** and **but**.
- Adding other connectives such as **because**, **so**, **if**, **when**.
- Adding more sophisticated connectives such as **although**, **despite**, **whereas**, **whilst** etc.
- changing the position of the connective so that it also appears at the start of a sentence (followed by a comma).

# Power Openers

Often children write with sentences that all start with the 'subject'. *The boy....He...His...Harry....*

The boy felt scared as he crossed the road. He was shaking and his heart was beating fast. He grasped the object in his pocket and held on to it for dear life. He looked around furtively and decided to go on.

*Power openers* encourage the children to start the sentence in different and varied ways using...

**-ing**

**-ed**

**-ly**

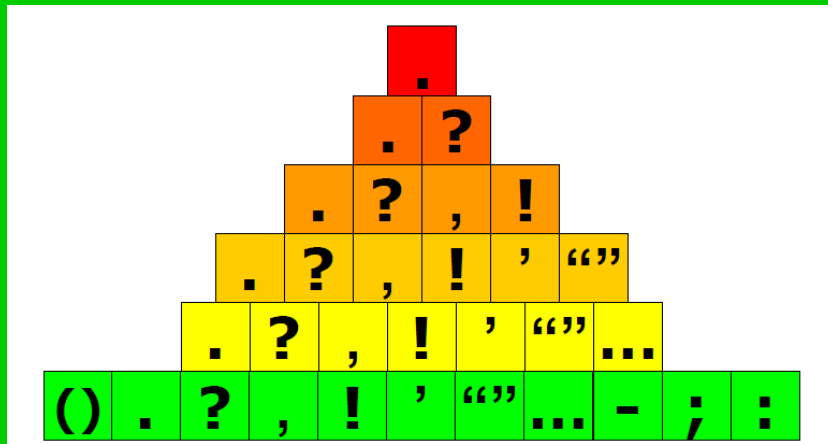
words

**Scared and shaking**, the boy crossed the road. His heart was beating fast. **Desperately**, he grasped the object in his pocket and held on to it for dear life. **Furtively**, he looked around and decided to go on.

# Punctuation

Pupils first need to be able to use basic punctuation accurately. These are the basics such as full stops and capital letters.

This shows the order that punctuation types could be introduced. Red is Level 1 up to Green at Level 5



For older pupils who are punctuating accurately, try to count how many different types of punctuation they have used and whether they could use another type. Ask them to list the types they have used at the end of a piece of writing.

## Other ideas:

Use **actions** or **say** the punctuation when pupils read sentences aloud. (Try kung-fu punctuation!) Keep punctuation on post-it notes to move from page to page when writing to remind them of the ones they could try to use.

# VCOP superheroes

At school, we have introduced the VCOP superheroes to help our children remember these key elements in their work.



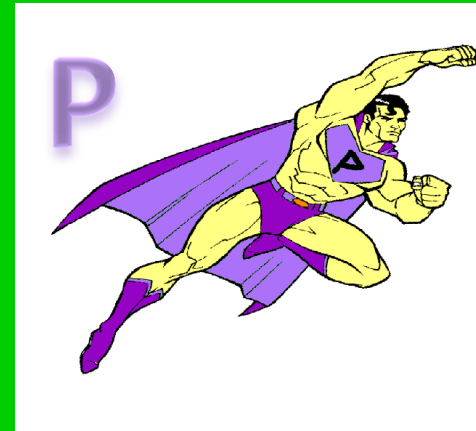
Violet Vocab

Captain  
Connective



The  
Incredible  
Opener

Doctor  
Punctuation



## Violet Vocab



### Violet's Super Powers

Violet has the power to help people really see how things look. She holds the secret of how characters and places really feel. Although words for sights and sounds are her favourite weapons, she knows the importance of taste, touch and smell too.

Violet knows how to pick just the right nouns or verbs to give writing real power over a reader.

She uses adjectives and adverbs to hypnotise people into really seeing and feeling a piece of writing.

# Captain Connective



## The Captain's Super Powers

The Captain holds the team together and without him writing can be repetitive and boring, holding no power over the reader at all.

His greatest power is to link ideas together providing a net to catch any reader.

# The Incredible Opener

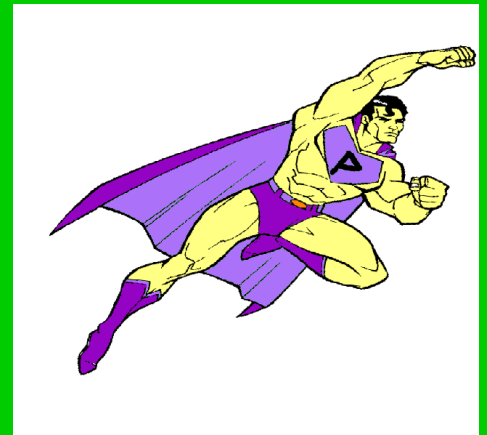


## The Incredible Opener's Super Powers

The Incredible Opener is a master of disguise. Sometimes, he jumps up and tells the reader when something is happening. Suddenly, he is adverb. Although, he can be a link between ideas just like Captain Connective. Alternatively, he can express an opposite idea. On dark, windy nights, when even the wolves stay in their dens, he can be a whole phrase!

He may seem like a bit of a Joker, but don't be fooled - he helps add structure. It's his job to hook the reader in and keep him reading.

# Doctor Punctuation



## Dr Punctuation's Super Powers

The Doctor's basic weapon is the power to stop and start a sentence. If capital letters and full stops are missing, or in the wrong place, writing is weak. It will not have the power to grab a reader.

His control over the reader is reinforced by the use of commas to separate ideas. They work well when combined with connectives and openers. He reveals what characters actually say with speech marks. Does he ask questions? Of course - that's a great weapon for hooking a reader.

He does not use his best weapons too often or their effects weaken. But, wow! An exclamation mark makes a reader think. An ellipsis makes a reader wonder...

V C O P

Some games to try...

Add wow words to the shopping list.

Go in alphabetical order for more able pupils.

Try alliteration (same letter sound)



I went to the shop  
and I bought...

an anxious alligator

a box of bouncing balls

a Carton of crunchy  
Cornflakes

a docile dog called Dale

# Vocabulary - WOW me!

Add in a  
new  
adjective  
each time.

Or uplevel  
the vocab.



Can you improve this sentence?  
Use exciting adjectives and alliteration.

Spaghetti tastes nice.

Slippy spaghetti tastes nice.

Slippy, slurpy spaghetti tastes nice.

Slippy, slurpy spaghetti tantalises.

Slippy, slurpy spaghetti tantalises my tastebuds.

This game  
is from Pie  
Corbett  
who has  
lots of  
great ideas  
to uplevel  
writing.

## Uplevel it!

Use more exciting nouns! Can you think of your own?

The man got in the car

Frankenstein got in the Bentley.

The mouse ate the cheese.

The rodent gobbled the Camembert.

A girl drank from a cup.

A maiden drank from a silver goblet.

The dog growled at the man.

The canine growled at the elderly gentleman.

# Don't repeat, smelly feet

## **Avoid repeating words and use varied vocabulary.**

Children often use the same word over and over. Encourage them to vary this by thinking of different ways to say the word. List these first:

i.e. **monster, martian, ET, creature** etc.

Tentatively, the alien stepped from the spaceship. The alien stood six-feet tall, with two probing eyes on stalks. When the alien moved, its enormous tentacles surrounded the alien's body like a swarm of pulsating, electric eels. As the alien glanced around furtively, the alien slithered a poisonous tentacle into its front pouch and withdrew a mysterious-looking object. The alien held the strange machine up above the alien's head and pulled down on a level. Thousands of sparks showered down on the alien causing it to smoke and smoulder. The alien's eyes became a blood-red and the alien's veins bulged in its neck. Time seemed to stand still for a second.

Make a list of all the words for 'alien' that you can think of. Include pronouns.  
Now read the passage out substituting your words.  
You are only allowed ONE of each word.

# Sentence maker

Sentence maker  
builds up from  
boring sentences  
and improves a  
line at a time.

The boy ate a cake.

The boy ate a jam and cream scone.

The boy munched on a jam and cream scone.

The boy munched hungrily on a jam and cream scone.

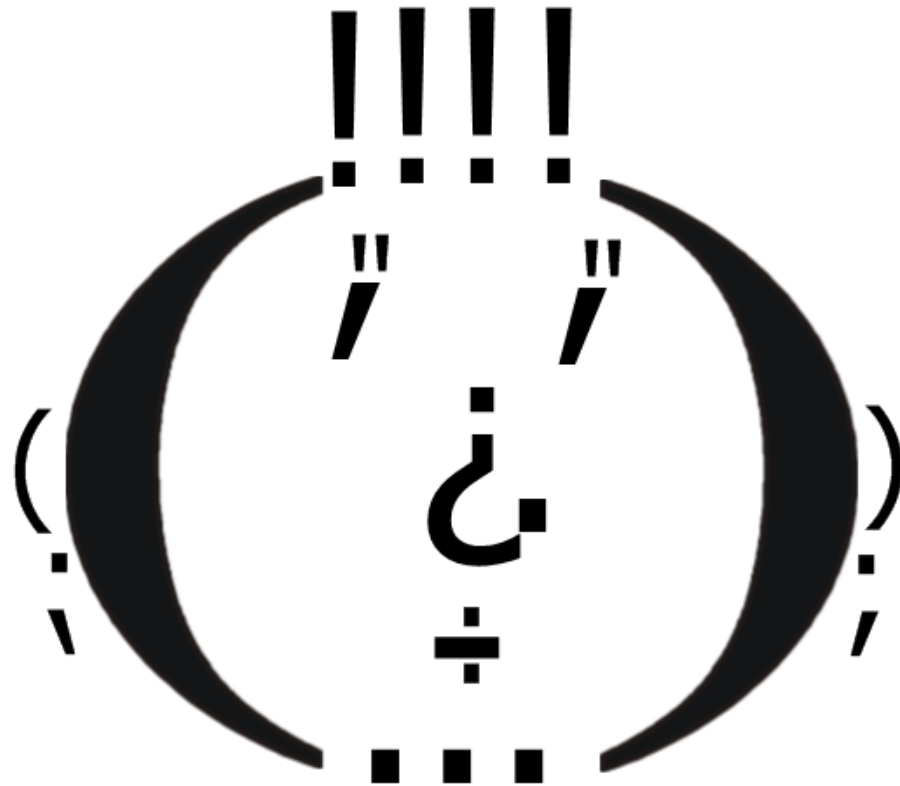
The boy munched hungrily on a jam and cream scone but he still wasn't full.

The mischievous boy munched hungrily on a jam and cream scone but he still wasn't full.

The boy munched hungrily on a delicious jam and cream scone but he still wasn't full.

# Punctuation Aide Memoire

Make a picture  
using different  
punctuation types  
as an aide  
memoire.



# Similes use adjectives...

Pick powerful adjectives that might fill the blanks

As \_\_\_\_\_ as a bat



As \_\_\_\_\_ as a diamond

As \_\_\_\_\_ as a witch

As \_\_\_\_\_ as a whistle

As \_\_\_\_\_ as an icicle

As \_\_\_\_\_ as a knife

As \_\_\_\_\_ as a snake



Use [www.thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com)  
to find wow words for  
boring ones.

jump

look

## Powerful verbs

Use [www.thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com)  
to find wow words for  
boring ones.

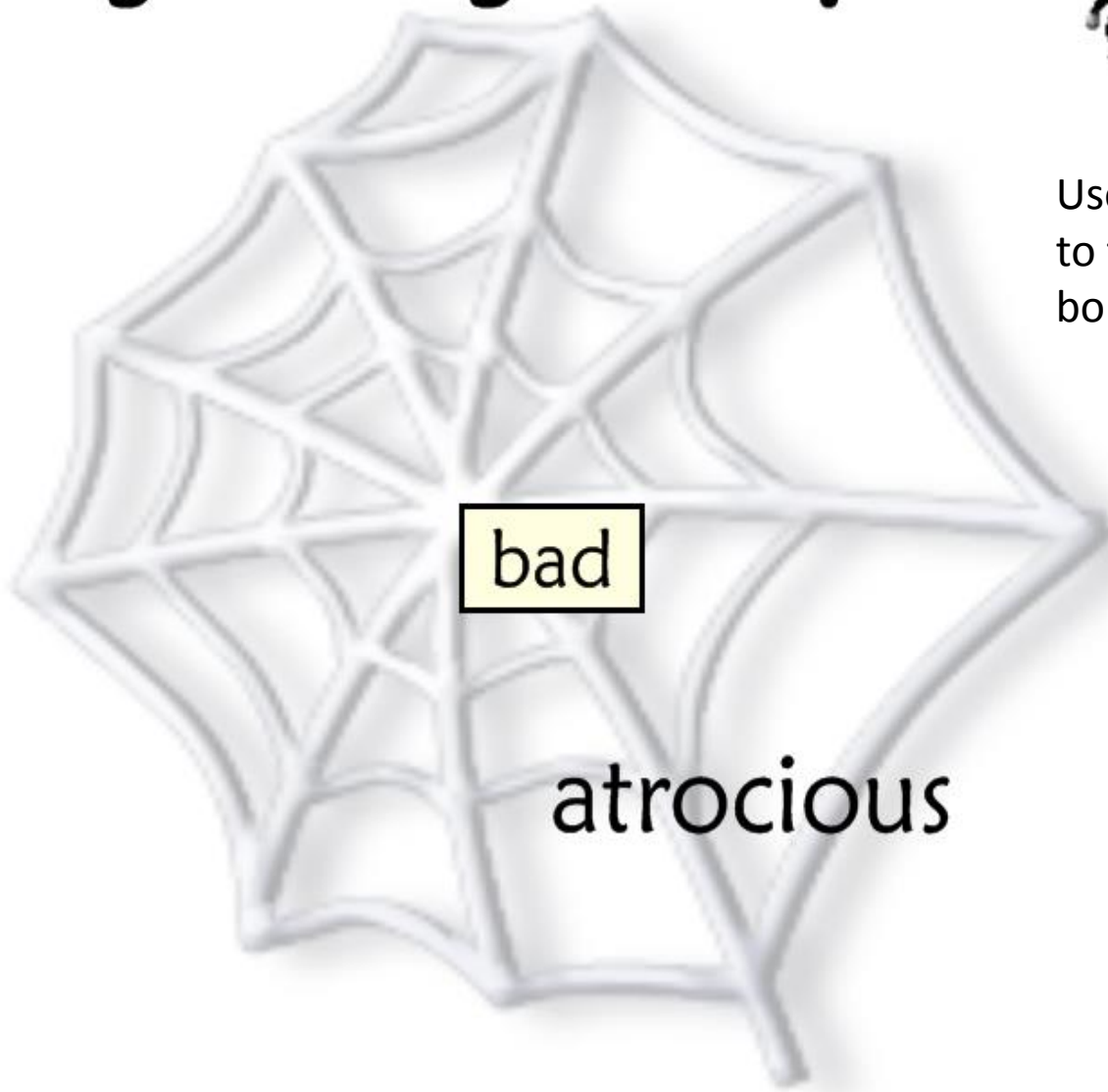
eat

walk

cry

sit

# Synonym spider



Use [www.thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com)  
to find wow words for  
boring ones.

bad

atrocious