



Then and Now

by Patricia

When my eldest child Jordan started to ask questions about her homework, I found myself stumped, and before long, my son Jack also needed help. I knew I needed to improve my skills, so as to help them improve theirs. I couldn't remember some of my schooling and had always struggled with the English language.

At the beginning of the school year, I saw an advertisement for the Read Write Now! program. I thought I could give it a go, a simple process you would think, but I was lacking confidence and was quite afraid I'd make a show of myself.

My doubts were overridden by a real desire to learn more about the English language and also to be more helpful to my children with their homework. I didn't have a lot of confidence when speaking with others or being part of a conversation in general. My understanding of 'big words' has been limited and therefore my vocabulary has suffered. My reasons for going to see Vicki were quite simple really; I was finding it hard to help my children Jordan and Jack with their schoolwork.

At the beginning of our lessons, Vicki and I did a brainstorm bubble, and I filled it with what I hoped to achieve during our time together. The list was short and to the point, Basic English. During the first few lessons my belief in myself was low and I sometimes worried if I'd take anything in.

Gradually, it all started to click and I gained confidence in myself to ask questions and have a go at the answers.

Some of our lessons have been light-hearted. Games of Scrabble, confusion over the words and meanings, etc. We have, I think, enjoyed our lessons, some of which have been quite difficult, real brainteasers. We have gotten through them with a few scares and lots of laughter. At the six month mark, we did another brainstorm bubble; I have in actual fact learnt a lot more than I set out to do in the first place.

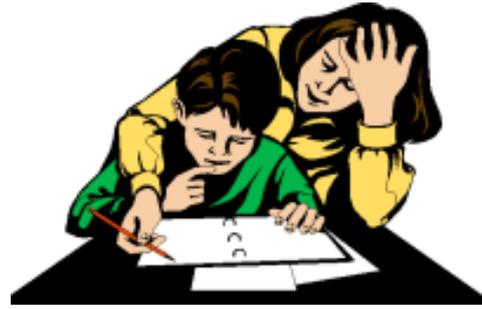
Now, even if I'm not sure of my punctuation and grammar and using it in the right context, I have the confidence and ability to either research it, look it up or use a dictionary to figure out the correct answer, and to move forward. Vicki and I set out to do certain things, none of which have been regimented. However in the last 6 months we have achieved so much more.

Now when my kids have problems with their homework, I am confident in the fact that I can give an informed and correct answer.

It is amazing to me that what a lot of people take for granted, I have re-learned or learnt for the first time in 30 years. My confidence is so much better, and my eagerness to speak, learn, correct and answer things, which normally I would have stood back from, is great. My outlook is better, clearer and brighter because of this program, and how Vicki has steered it in the right direction for me to meet my needs.

Trish worked with her tutor, Vicki, for nine months. This piece of writing was developed over four weeks, working on spelling, punctuation, and using language reconstruction techniques to order sentences and paragraphs. During this period, Trish used a thesaurus for the first time.

Activities



**Find some facts
by checking in the text:**

The story teller, who wrote this text is **Patricia**. She calls herself **Trish**.

How many children does Trish have? 1 2 3

What is the name of her eldest child?

Is the eldest child a girl or a boy? Girl Boy

What is the name of her younger child, a son?

Can you find Trish's tutor's name?

Use these names, to tell your tutor a brief **summary** of this text, **using your own words**, *without looking at the text*.

Now by *looking in the text*, find the answers to the following questions and show your tutor **where in the text** you can see the answer.

When did Trish see the ad for the Read Write Now! program?

What does Trish say was her "quite simple" reason "for going to see Vicki"?

What did Trish put in her brainstorm bubble at the beginning of her lessons? (*Hint: It's 2 words.*)

About how long has Trish been getting tutoring, when she wrote this piece? (*Clue: It's not as long as her total amount of tutoring.*)

You might like to discuss with your tutor what a **thesaurus** is...

Here is a sample entry from a simple edition of a thesaurus.

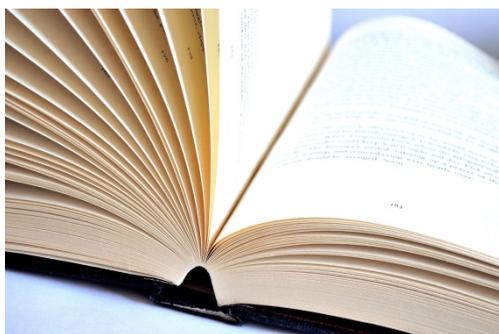
homework *noun* assignment, schoolwork, lesson, task

and another entry from a more comprehensive thesaurus:

homework *n.* drill, practice, set task, study

A thesaurus can be handy when you want to expand your vocabulary – for example, when you are writing about something and find yourself using the same word too many times!

It's boring to read the same word over and over. Your writing becomes more interesting with use of different words – as long as they mean exactly what you want them to.



When you use a thesaurus, you still have to choose your words carefully, because each of the suggested alternatives are likely to convey a slightly different meaning.

Without a thesaurus, can you think of a different word that could be used for each word in brackets (below)?

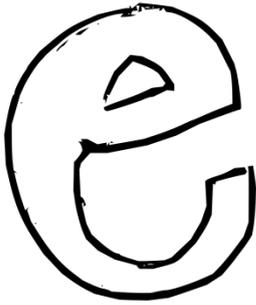
Remember the aim is to NOT change the meaning!

Trish wanted to improve her, so she
(learning)

..... Read Write Now! Read Write Now gave her a
(rang)

..... The tutor's name is Vicki. Vicki and Trish
(mentor or teacher)

..... at the library, once every
(get together) (7 days)



Did you know that the letter 'e' is the most commonly occurring letter in the English language?

Here are some of the 'big words' that Trish uses. They all include 'e'.

Work out which of these words (from the left-hand column) goes into each line, according to where the letter 'e' occurs:

stumped	E											
process	B	E										
confidence	D	E										
overridden	R	E				E			E			
desire	T		E									
conversation	O		E					E				
achieve	G				E							
belief	C				E							
worried	A				E							
gained	P				E							
brainteasers	C				E							N
regimented	S					E						
context	W					E						
eagerness	C						E			E		
thesaurus	B						E			E		

Some other 'big words' that Trish uses are:

dictionary	doubts	punctuation	brainstorm	grammar	vocabulary
	advertisement	light-hearted	suffered	research	

Select and write the correct word from the box, to fit each definition:

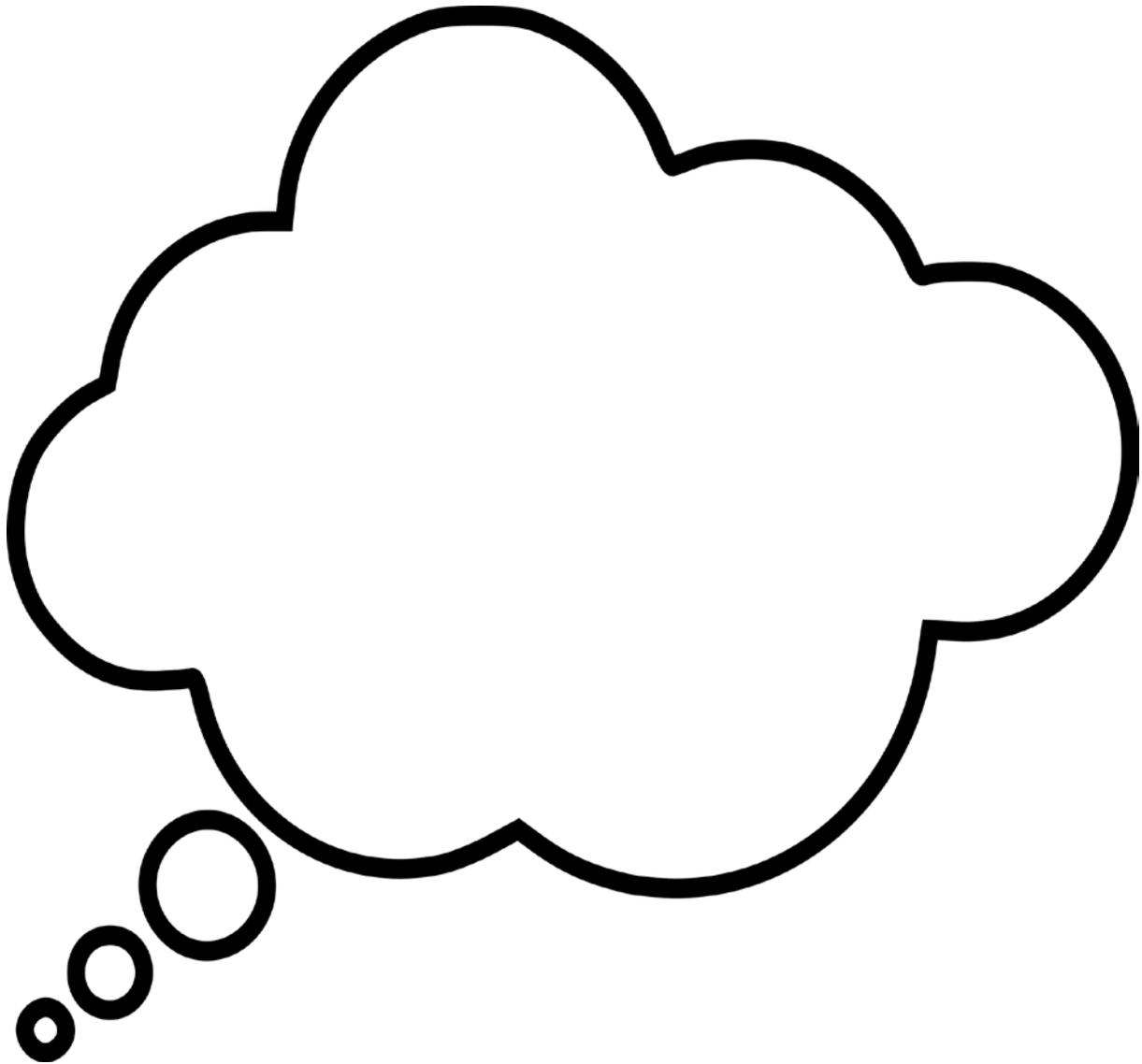
<i>Definition or clue</i>	<i>Word from box</i>
the words in a language	
study of one topic to discover new information	
how parts of a language are put together	
a book or website with word definitions	
misgivings, hesitations	
promotion of a product, in print or other media	
the markings in a written language (not letters)	

Vicki and Trish had a good **talk** about Trish's needs. Trish was **anxious** about making mistakes. She needed to build her **self-belief**. They both started to work with **enthusiasm**. Sometimes they used **puzzles**! Trish learnt well and managed to **attain** some good results. From that, she **won** confidence.

Now use some of the 'big words' on page 5 to substitute in the next copy of the text (below). Each **bold** word in the above copy of the text can be replaced by one of the words from page 5. Write it into the below copy of the text, without altering the meaning of each sentence.

Vicki and Trish had a good about Trish's needs. Trish was about making mistakes. She needed to build her They both started to work with Sometimes they used! Trish learnt well and managed to some good results. From that, she confidence.

Trish writes about doing a brainstorm bubble at the beginning of her lessons with Vicki. She filled it with what she hoped to achieve in tutoring. Would you like to do the same, here, for your learning goals?



You could use the bubble, to brainstorm about something else, if you like.

For example, you could brainstorm

- the skills you have confidence in, or
- types of puzzles or brainteasers that you know of, or
- the names of all of the punctuation marks that you know of, or
- things you have already learned in tutoring.
- Read this short text.