

Word Learning from Childhood to Adulthood

Monday 16th March 2026

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Park Grove Primary Academy will soon be taking part in a memory study with researchers at the University of York. Your child's class has been chosen to take part in the activities, and this letter provides some more information on what your child will be asked to do and provides you with the opportunity to withdraw your child from taking part. The study will begin on **Tuesday 14th April**.

It is important to be aware of the information that is provided by the Department of Psychology about the general terms and conditions that apply with respect to the processing of personal data. Please consult: <https://wiki.york.ac.uk/display/PsySharedDocs/Key+information+about+GDPR>

1) Background

Dr Emma James, at the University of York, would like to invite you to allow your child to take part in the following research project. Please read this information sheet carefully and let us know if anything is unclear or you would like further information. Please note that if, in the course of our study, we discover something that raises concerns about your child's safety or the safety of others, we are obliged to seek further expert help and advice.

2) What is the purpose of the study?

The study is part of a larger project exploring how children and adults learn new vocabulary. We will explore how different types of learning activities affect how well people of different ages remember new words. To do this, children will take part in game-like word learning activities and memory tests over the course of a week. Ultimately, we hope that this research project will help to inform effective approaches for supporting vocabulary learning at different points in children's education.

3) Why is my child being invited to take part?

The invitation relates to a research project that depends on testing children in Years 4 and 5.

4) Do I have to agree to allow my child to be tested?

No, participation is optional. You may keep this information sheet for your records. If you do not want your child to take part, you can opt out at any time—before or during the study—without needing to provide a reason. You can do this via the short online **Google Form** provided at the end of this letter.

Your school's headteacher has given consent for the school to take part. At the start of the study, we will also explain the activities to your child and make it clear that they can stop at any time during the study without having to give a reason.

We will begin the study on **Tuesday 14th April** and will be working with multiple classes. Your child's data will be stored anonymously. We are therefore not able to remove their responses after study completion.

Children will be given a small stationary gift to thank them for their participation.

5) What will my child be asked to do?

Your child will be asked to learn the names of creatures that appear in an online game, set on an alien planet, for example a "*blanty*". Using alien creatures allows us to measure children's and adults' ability to learn entirely new vocabulary, without any prior knowledge. Throughout the study, your child will complete different tasks that involve paying attention to the sounds and spellings of those names and responding to them in various ways (through typing and clicking).

Your child will complete similar tasks the **next day**, and **one week later** they will take part in a final session to see how well they remember the creatures and their names.

The study will take place on **three days** (Day 1, Day 2 and Day 8). Day 1's session will take around **45 minutes** and the sessions on Day 2 and Day 8 will take around **15 minutes each**.

We will ask the school to provide some basic background information on your child, including: their name and date of birth (see Section 8 below), sex, whether they speak English as an additional language and whether they have diagnosed reading or language difficulties. This background information will **not** affect your child's eligibility to take part in the study.

6) Where will the research sessions take place?

Testing will take place at school either in the classroom with laptops or in a computer suite (if applicable). Every effort will be made to ensure that the research sessions are as enjoyable and relaxed as possible for the children. The total testing time should not exceed 1 hour 15 minutes over three sessions, as described above.

7) Who will run the testing sessions?

All our researchers have Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS, formerly, Criminal Record Bureau, CRB) clearance for working with children. Lucy Fowler (a former teacher and trained researcher) will meet with and test the children taking part, alongside two research assistants.

8) Will you share my child's data with 3rd parties?

We are collecting the following type of personal data (namely, data that could identify who your pupils are): names and dates of birth. We will access dates of birth on site, which will be immediately converted into years and months for storage in our dataset. Dates of birth will not be stored in our dataset.

Names will be used to assign each child an anonymous ID, allowing us to link their responses across the three sessions. We will store this list of names and anonymous IDs separately to the children's performance data, on a password protected computer that is only accessible to the project team at the University of York. We will retain this list until we have finished data collection in your child's school, after which point it will be securely destroyed.

We will not share your child's personal data with anyone else.

Our research group is committed to open research practices, which includes sharing research data through public repositories such as the Open Science Framework. This way, the child's anonymised data will be shared publicly with others. Anonymised data may also be reused by the research team or other third parties for secondary research and/or teaching purposes. We will never share any personal data and the data shared will not be able to identify the child. When data are shared, they can be accessed by other people who might use them for other research questions that are not known to us. **Please only allow your child to take part in the study if you agree with this.**

9) Will you transfer the data internationally?

We will not share any personal data internationally. Anonymised data might be shared internationally, as explained in the previous section.

10) Will my child be identified in any research outputs?

Your child's study data will be analysed to answer our research questions and will be used in research outputs. This can include presentations and publications in scientific journals as well as other types of verbal or written outputs. Your child **cannot** be identified based on these outputs.

11) Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about this information sheet or concerns about how your child's data is being processed, please contact Dr Emma James in the first instance. This project received ethics approval from the Ethics Committee in the Department of Psychology at the University of York. If you have any questions you would like to ask the chair of the ethics committee (currently Dr Angela de Bruin), please contact psyc529@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk.

Contact Details: Dr Emma James, Department of Psychology,
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If you would prefer that your child does **not** participate in this vocabulary learning study, please let us know by completing the opt-out form using the link or QR code below. You can opt out any time before or during, but not after, testing in your child's school.

If you do not opt out, then your child will be asked to take part in the study *Word Learning from Childhood to Adulthood* described in the information sheet above.

We will send you a reminder in **one week** describing for a second time how to opt out.

If you have any questions, you can contact the project team: psychology-learnlab@york.ac.uk

Opt-Out Google Form: <https://tinyurl.com/wordlearn-optout>



Or scan the QR code: