

Design & Technology Vocabulary Progression

Year 1 – Year 6

A progressive vocabulary overview based on the United Curriculum Primary D&T and Food & Nutrition framework. Vocabulary becomes increasingly technical and moves from naming and describing towards analysing, justifying and critiquing design decisions.

EYFS	Year 1/2	Year 3/4	Year 5/6
Join – putting things together. Build – making something stand or fit. Cut – using tools to make shapes. Fold – bending material. Tools – things we use to make. Materials – what something is made from. Strong – hard to break. Weak – easy to break. Fix – make something work again. Design – planning what to make. Recipe – instructions for making food. Ingredient – things we mix to cook. Safety – keeping ourselves protected.	design : Plan and create a product. designer : Person who creates products. problem : Something needing a solution. need : Something required or necessary. idea : A thought or suggestion. improve : Make something better. function : Purpose or job of something. materials : Substances used to make products. design criteria : Requirements a design must meet. product : An item made for use. prototype : Early model for testing. test : Check performance or effectiveness. sketch : Quick drawing of an idea. develop : Improve and build an idea. material : Substance used to make things. natural : Made by nature. human-made : Made by people. properties : Characteristics of a material. paper : Thin material from wood pulp. card : Thick, stiff paper. fabric : Material made from fibres. wood : Hard material from trees. flexible : Bends easily without breaking. rigid : Stiff and hard to bend. suitable : Right for a purpose.	user : Person who will use the product. purpose : Reason something is made. design process : Steps used to create a design. ideation : Generating and developing ideas. criteria : Standards used for judging. aesthetics : Appearance and visual appeal. design development : Improving and refining a design. user needs : Requirements of the user. dimensions : Measurements of size. 3D sketch : Drawing showing three-dimensional form. exploded diagram : Drawing showing separated parts. cross-section : View of an object's interior. feedback : Opinions used to improve designs. metal : Strong material from ores. concrete : Hard building material. steel : Strong metal alloy. construction materials : Materials used in building. plastic : Synthetic mouldable material. properties : Characteristics of a material.	CAD : Computer software for designing products. dimensions : Measurements of size. copy : Duplicate an object or design. transform : Change shape, size, or position. combine : Join parts together. user testing : Testing with intended users. iterate : Repeatedly improve a design. sustainability : Using resources responsibly long-term. product lifecycle : Stages from creation to disposal. 6Rs : Six strategies reducing environmental impact. responsible design : Designing with social and environmental care. redesign : Change and improve an existing design. recyclable : Able to be recycled. recycled : Made from reused materials. biodegradable : Breaks down naturally over time. bioplastic : Plastic made from biological materials. durable : Long-lasting and hard-wearing.

select: Choose from options. measure: Find size or length. mark: Make a visible sign. cut: Divide using a tool. fold: Bend over onto itself. shape: Form or outline. join: Connect parts together. assemble: Put parts together. finish: Final surface treatment. ruler: Tool for measuring lines. centimetres: Units of metric length. template: Pattern used as a guide. hole punch: Tool for making holes. needle: Tool used for sewing. thread: Thin strand for stitching. stitch: Sewing loop joining materials. fastener: Object that holds parts together. 2D: Flat, having two dimensions. 3D: Having three dimensions. length: Measurement from end to end. width: Measurement across something. height: Measurement from bottom to top. strong: Able to withstand force. stable: Not easily moved or toppled. base: Bottom support of a structure. structure: Arrangement of connected parts. chassis: Main supporting frame. axle: Rod supporting wheels. support: Hold up or strengthen. machine: Device that does work. mechanism: Parts working together for movement. movement: Change of position. slider: Mechanism moving in a straight line. lever: Bar that pivots.	cost: Amount of money required. sustainability: Using resources responsibly long-term. durable: Long-lasting and hard-wearing. saw: Tool for cutting materials. set square: Tool for drawing right angles. right angle: Angle measuring ninety degrees. sanding: Smoothing surfaces with abrasive paper. forming: Shaping a material. casting: Shaping material in a mould. mould: Hollow shape used for forming. manufacture: Making products on a larger scale. subtractive: Removing material to create shape. laminating: Bonding layers together. refine: Improve and make more precise. frame: Supporting structure. shell: Outer covering of a product. member: Structural part of a framework. triangulation: Using triangles for strength. joint: Connection between parts. strength: Ability to withstand forces. stability: Ability to remain balanced. load: Weight or force carried. buttress: Support that strengthens a structure. tie: Connector preventing movement. support: Holds up a structure. pulley: Wheel used with rope.	conductor: Material allowing electricity to flow. material selection: Choosing suitable materials. additive manufacturing: Making by adding material layers. 3D printing: Creating objects layer by layer. CAM: Computer-aided manufacturing. extruding: Forcing material through a shaped opening. refine: Improve and make more precise. manufacture: Produce products on a larger scale. prototype: Early model for testing. 3D print: Produce using a 3D printer. splice: Join two parts together. frame structure: Structure with a supporting framework. shell structure: Structure supported by outer skin. structural strength: Ability to withstand forces. structural stability: Ability to remain balanced. load: Weight or force carried. support: Holds up a structure. mechanical system: Components working together mechanically. input/output: Energy or information entering and leaving. mechanical advantage: Force increased by a mechanism. electro-mechanical system: System combining electrical and mechanical parts.
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	linkage: Connected parts transmitting movement. linear: Moving in a straight line. reciprocating: Moving back and forth. oscillating: Swinging repeatedly side to side. wheel: Circular object that rotates. fixed axle: Axle that does not rotate. free axle: Axle that rotates freely. rotary: Turning in a circle. like: Something preferred. dislike: Something not preferred. works: Functions correctly. evaluate: Judge quality or effectiveness. aesthetics: Appearance and visual appeal. reuse: Use again. waste: Unwanted or discarded material. recycle: Process materials for reuse. responsible: Acting with care and consideration.	gear: Toothed wheel transmitting motion. cam: Rotating part creating movement. follower: Part moved by a cam. mechanism: Parts producing movement. rotary movement: Movement in a circle. mechanical system: Components working together mechanically. function: Purpose or role. circuit: Complete path for electricity. electricity: Flow of electric charge. component: Individual part of a system. cell: Single source of electrical energy. battery: Collection of cells supplying power. switch: Device opening or closing a circuit. LED: Light-emitting diode. input: Signal or energy entering. output: Result or energy leaving. conductor: Material allowing electricity to flow. compare: Identify similarities and differences. prototype: Early model for testing. analyse: Examine in detail. size: How large something is. safety: Protection from harm. environmental: Relating to the environment. waste: Unwanted material. sustainable: Environmentally responsible over time. ethical: Morally right and fair	mechanism: Parts producing movement. function: Purpose or role. system: Interconnected parts working together. microcontroller: Small programmable computer chip. program: Instructions for a computer. sensor: Device detecting changes. control: Direct or regulate operation. control system: System managing outputs automatically. electrical system: Components using electricity. electro-mechanical: Combining electrical and mechanical elements. simulate: Model real-world operation. function testing: Checking a product works correctly. design criteria: Requirements a design must meet. justify: Give reasons for decisions. responsible decision-making: Choosing actions with consideration. environmental impact: Effect on the environment. lifecycle: Stages of existence. reduce: Use fewer resources. reuse: Use again. refill: Fill again for reuse. repair: Fix damage or faults. recycle: Process materials for reuse. refuse: Avoid unnecessary products or materials.
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			upcycle: Reuse creatively with added value.
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Planning note: Vocabulary should be explicitly taught, used in practical contexts, revisited and then extended. The progression is intended to support increasingly precise technical talk, explanation, evaluation and design justification.