

We develop mature vocabularies by being exposed to unusual words in context. With this in mind, let's look at a study that measured the amount of unusual words we come across from various listening and reading sources.

Number of Rare Words Met per Thousand

Listening

	Rare words per thousand
Adult to child, 6 months	9.3
Adult to child, 3 years	9.0
Adult to child, 10 years	11.7
Adult to adult	17.3
Prime time TV	22.7

Reading

	Rare words per thousand
Children's book	30.9
Adult book	52.7
Comic book	53.5
Popular magazine	65.7
Newspaper	68.3
Scientific paper	128

(Source: Hayes and Ahrens 1988)