

# A Vocabulary Vine for Leila and the Blue Fox

## Language and Oracy in Context

1

Taken from the text: **mantra** (p29)  
‘Sunlight!’ is her **mantra**. ‘Sunlight so I shine!’

*Have you ever had a sentence in your head that helps you feel calm, brave or focused? For example:  
I can do this! Stay calm. One step at a time.*

These are all **mantras**. A **manta** is a short phrase or sentence people repeat - kind of like a mental cheer or reminder.

In pairs, think of a time when something felt a little tricky. *What short sentence could you have repeated in your head to help you? How would it have helped?* Share your new **mantra** with the class. As you do, consider the body language that would best support the aim of your **mantra** (for example, your posture, facial expressions and breathing).

2

Idiom from the text: **‘It’s like a punch in the gut’** (p.40)

If something happens feels like a ‘punch in the gut’, it means it feels sudden, shocking, painful and hard to ignore. People often use this idiom when they feel emotional pain. In a small group, consider the following scenarios. *Which do you think would feel most ‘like a punch in the gut’ to you? Why?*

Being told you can’t be involved in something you were looking forward to

Being blamed for something you didn’t do

Being left out of a team

Hearing a friend is moving schools

You might like to draw on these sentence starters to help you:  
*I would like to start by saying that I think ... would feel most like a ‘punch in the gut’ to me because...  
I understand your point, but I think ...*

3

Taken from the text: **ricochet** (p142) – ‘she felt every jolt of the sledge **ricochet** through her bones’

**Ricochet** means when something hits a surface and then bounces off in a different direction, often quickly, for example:

*The ball hit the wall and ricocheted across the playground.*

In pairs, consider:

- *What everyday object might **ricochet**?*
- *What might it hit?*
- *Where could it go next?*

Now create your own **ricocheting** sentence using the frame:

*It hit the ... and then ricocheted ...*

*Eg. It hit the floor and then ricocheted up into the air.*

4

Taken from the text: **indentations** (p127)

‘They are deep **indentations**, showing a mouth wide as Leila’s arm is long.’

**Synonyms:** dent, hollow, notch, groove

**Antonyms:** bump, lump, mound

**Word origins:** from the Latin *dens*, meaning ‘tooth’ + *indentare*, ‘to furnish with teeth’.

Middle English: *indenten* – ‘to make notches’; ‘to give something a toothed or jagged appearance’

An indentation is a small dip or hollow in a surface, like a dent where something has been pressed in. In pairs, decide which of these sentences have use the word indentation correctly. *Why/why not?*

The pencil made an indentation in the paper.

The sun made an large indentation in the sky.

The coin left a small indentation in the clay.

5

**Words and phrases to bank:**

**to flank something/someone (p146)**

= to be on each side of

**Leila feels the atmosphere shift between them (p16)**

= the feelings between them suddenly change

**with an impenetrable gaze (p31)**

= looking in a way that you can’t read their feelings or emotions

**how friable the sea ice is (p197)**

= how easily it crumbles or breaks

**a widening abyss (p224)**

= a gap, space or distance that is getting bigger



# A Forest of Words for Leila and the Blue Fox

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falters (p4)  
brandishing (p8)  
manoeuvres (p10)

## **Chapter 2**

determinedly (p16)  
assemblage (p19)  
scavenging (p21)

feels the atmosphere  
shift (p16)

## **Chapter 3**

mantra (p29)  
featureless (p29)  
irresistible (p33)

an impenetrable gaze  
(p31)

## **Chapter 4**

illuminate (p38)  
porous (p39)  
tears prickle (p40)

like a punch in the  
gut (p40)

## **Chapter 5**

jabbering (p42)  
jovially (p43)  
interjects (p46)

## **Chapter 6**

unhooking (p55)  
expanse (p56)  
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A miracle worker (p56)

## **Chapter 7**

assorted (p63)  
inexplicable (p64)  
restlessness (p65)

eyebrows arching  
(p65)

## **Chapter 8**

euphoria (p78)  
cyclical (p79)  
fluorescent (p79)

## **Chapter 9**

cavernous (p88)  
obscuring (p91)  
dazzlement (p91)

in a staggered line  
(p87)

## **Chapter 10**

torrent (p103)  
defensively (p105)  
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## **Chapter 11**

traitorous (p112)  
indignation (p113)  
glinting (p114)

## **Chapter 12**

tundra (p124)  
tethered (p125)  
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## **Chapter 13**

animosity (p133)  
rouses (p133)  
indistinguishable  
(p134)

## **Chapter 14**

ricochet (p142)  
chattering (p142)  
scrutinising (p144)

## **Chapter 15**

swivelling (p153)  
instinctively (p156)  
evaporated (p156)

heavy as her heart in  
her chest (p162)

## **Chapter 16**

eroded (p174)  
snarled (p174)  
imperceptible (p178)

## **Chapter 17**

treacherous (p188)  
mercifully (189)  
fathomless (p193)  
friable (p197)

## **Chapter 18**

thawing (p200)  
unlatches (p206)  
prickling (p208)  
  
It sets Leila's teeth on  
edge (p206)

## **Chapter 19**

melodramatic (p210)  
raucously (p212)  
merriment (p212)

## **Chapter 20**

spindly (p220)  
agonised (p223)  
abyss (p224)

## **Chapter 21**

barnacled (p229)  
trembling (p230)  
dizzying (p234)

## **Chapter 22**

uprooted (p237)  
haze (p240)  
  
the emotion coursing  
through her (p237)

