

Dorling, D. (2010) Words count, letter, New Statesman, 8 February, page 6.

Words Count

Peter Wilby's missing sources (First Thoughts, 1 February) are to be found in George Irvin's book: *Super Rich: The rise of inequality in Britain and the United States*. The numbers work when you realise that the encouragements being talked about are word counts.

Preschool children in the US hear, an average, 36 words from their parents or carers per minute in the families of professionals, 21, in working class families, and ten if their family (often a single parent) relies on welfare. Those words are the difference between "You! Get the fuck down from that table. Yes you!" (ten words); and "Baby, please could you come down carefully from the table darling, you know it's not safe, we've talked about it before" (21 words). I won't attempt the 36 words version.

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