NYC Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

CIPL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SERIES

Word Work and Word Play

A Practice Guide for Vocabulary Instruction in K–12 Classrooms

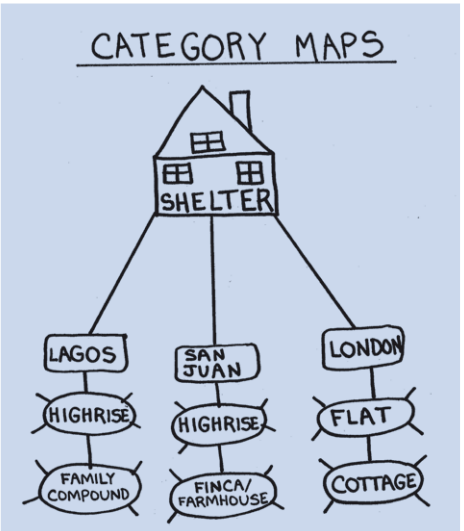
A Category Map Describing Characteristics of Humans, Felines, and Equines

Characteristics	Humans	Felines	Equines
Habitat	*Live in shelters*	*Live in shelters*	*Live in shelters and outdoors*
Food	*Omnivore*	*Carnivore*	*Vegetarian*
Family Grouping	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*
Use of Tools	*Yes*	*Occasional*	*No*
Social Behavior	*Live in colonies*	*Live in family groups*	*Live in herds*
Logical Thinking	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*

acquire
verb

- If you acquire something, you obtain it.
- If you acquire a skill or a habit, you learn it or develop it.

synonyms: to get; to obtain



NYC Department of Education

Carmen Fariña
Chancellor

Phil Weinberg
Deputy Chancellor
Division of Teaching & Learning

Anna Commitante
Senior Executive Director
Curriculum, Instruction & Professional Learning

Esther Klein Friedman
Executive Director
Department of Literacy & Academic Intervention Services

52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Acknowledgments

This guide is a publication of the
Office of Curriculum, Instruction & Professional Learning.

Contributing Authors
Esther Klein Friedman, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Department of Literacy and Academic Intervention Services

Patricia Pinkerton
Director
Department of Literacy

Kira Bonn
Director
Department of Academic Intervention Services

Senior Instructional Specialists, Literacy and Academic Intervention Services:
AnnMarie Dull
Lena Kim
Nick Kuroly
Rebekah Nelson
Karen Low
Marci Mann
Barry Bullis

This handbook is a tool that schools may use to support a robust model of vocabulary development in classrooms. It presents suggested skills and strategies based on research in this area, providing strong practice options for schools. This resource does not represent DOE policy or contractual obligations. Principals, other supervisors, and teachers may utilize this guide at their discretion. The New York City Department of Education reserves the right to make changes and updates to this guide at any point in time.

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Introduction

In the work of literacy instruction, vocabulary is one of the most important components. Its connection to reading comprehension is clear and research has shown just how connected it is to proficient reading. The larger children's vocabularies are in the primary grades, the greater their academic achievement in the later grades.

Why is vocabulary such a critical area? We know that a person's vocabulary is an area that will play a role in the worlds of college and career. We also know that it has a tremendous relationship with reading comprehension, especially as children move up the grades, and thus impacts knowledge-building in the various disciplines. Research related to vocabulary instruction and word knowledge shows that there is a strong correlation between knowing words and comprehending text *(Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2008)*.

How is vocabulary learned? Children acquire much of their vocabulary incidentally, meaning the vocabulary is learned through immersion in and exposure to daily language activities (reading, talking, listening, etc.). Words are also learned through direct instruction, which means that the words are taught by the teacher in a structured and systematic way. Good instruction, therefore, should support word learning using a combination of these two approaches *(Report of the National Reading Panel, 2006)*.

Why encourage children to read to build vocabulary? Wide reading—reading in quantity about a variety of topics—is the most efficient way individuals of all ages build vocabulary. The more a person reads, the more vocabulary is acquired. However, because vocabulary is so strongly correlated with reading, having a poor vocabulary can be a deterrent to reading. This presents a 'chicken and egg' issue. Comprehension is difficult when vocabulary is limited, but research tells us that increasing reading volume is a very efficient way to grow vocabulary. As mentioned earlier, being surrounded by language (English or other native languages) is the way that young children build their schema for language and a way that vocabulary is built. Watching certain types of television programs might also add to their vocabulary. But listening to books and, as children acquire reading ability, reading books is the most efficient way to develop a strong vocabulary.

What are the effects of print exposure on vocabulary acquisition? Like most learning, vocabulary building is a incremental process. One of the most effective ways to achieve it is through consistent exposure to a wide range of print materials *(Nagy, Anderson & Herman, 1985)*. Exposure to print materials is so effective because print materials contain a larger number and greater variety of words than oral language *(Hayes & Ehrens as cited in Cunningham & Stanovich, 2001)*. Because adding any given word to one's vocabulary is an incremental process, children must be exposed to that word a number of times, so print exposure must be consistent and frequent *(Nagy, et al., 1985)*. While even one meaningful exposure to a single word can result in a limited or partial understanding of that word, a child needs to experience the word in a variety of ways in order to fully understand all the meanings of that word *(Nagy, et al., 1985)*. This is especially true for more complex words that have multiple meanings. If a child sees a word used in print in a variety of ways and a variety of forms, his or her knowledge of that word will incrementally increase each time he/she sees the word used in a different text in a different way *(Hayes & Ehrens as cited in Cunningham & Stanovich 2001).*

Additionally, learning vocabulary through print exposure has a number of other positive effects on a child's abilities. It has been shown that multiple exposure to print increases overall verbal abilities, including in spelling and vocabulary *(Stanovich et al., 1996)*. It has also been found that sustained exposure to a variety of print materials also increased overall knowledge *(Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991; Cunningham & Stanovich, 2003; West, Stanovich & Mitchell, 1993)*.

Not all exposure is equal, however, and teachers must carefully select materials that will maximize the effects the exposure has on building vocabulary knowledge.

How should teachers select materials for vocabulary instruction? It is most important that children be exposed to a variety of materials from a variety of genres such as novels, primary source documents, trade books, manuals, etc. *(Chall, 1990)*. Children also need exposure to print materials at a range of reading levels, with the most challenging materials used in classrooms with teachers there to support them *(Chall, 1990; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991)*. When working independently, students need exposure to materials for which they have sufficient background knowledge in order to derive the meanings of unfamiliar words from the text. Simply stated, if a text contains too much difficult vocabulary, then children will not have context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words *(Nagy, et al., 1987)*. Therefore, in order to maximize the effects of independent print exposure on vocabulary acquisition, teachers must work with children to carefully select texts that have a balance of unfamiliar and familiar words. Hayes and Ahrens *(1988)* describe this point most compellingly in their study of various sources of oral and written language. When they looked at the frequency of rare words in various print media they found the following:

FREQUENCY OF WORD USE IN MAJOR SOURCES OF ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Rare Words per 1,000

I. Printed texts		**II. Television texts**		**III. Adult speech**	
Newspapers	68.3	Adult shows	22.7	College graduates talk with friends/spouses	17.3
Popular magazines	65.7	Children's shows	20.2		
Adult books	52.7				
Children's books	30.9				
Preschool books	16.3				

The table illustrates clearly that reading, whether texts written for children or adults, provides significantly more exposure to challenging words than other media exposure. Neither conversation nor television comes close.

Thoughtful selection of books with rich vocabulary can be used for a variety of purposes and audiences. An example is the children's book *Imogene's Antlers* by David Smalls. While this is a book that might be suitable for reading aloud in the early grades, it exposes students to sophisticated vocabulary, including words such as **antlers, difficult, prodded, glared, advice, offer, fainted, lovely, decked, several, decorate, wandered, milliner, arrived, assistants, sighed, eventful, overjoyed**. A sentence from the book illustrates this point clearly: **"Her brother, Norman, consulted the encyclopedia, and then announced that Imogene had turned into a rare form of miniature elk!"** This is the reason picture books can be successfully used with older students for 'read to' and 'read by' purposes. They offer a quick and engaging way to build vocabulary and background knowledge, especially in students who experience reading challenges *(Coyne, 2004, 2005)*.

How do we support students who struggle to read? For students who struggle to read, vocabulary acquisition through wide reading becomes very problematic. These students are typically reading texts that are below their grade level, and not necessarily doing a lot of reading in general. It is important to provide students with texts they can actually read so they engage in sufficient practice—but we also work to accelerate their reading level. Since it is unlikely that sophisticated vocabulary will be presented in text that is far below grade level, it is critical to attend to vocabulary acquisition at the same time that we are teaching students to read. While wide reading on their own is the most ideal way to grow vocabulary, we can support students in other ways—by providing opportunities to hear rich text read to them (by teachers, peers, or electronically).

What strategies are effective in teaching vocabulary? While wide reading is a major way to build vocabulary and background knowledge, research shows that there are many effective strategies that help students build up this skill. This practice guide contains many strategies influenced by the major researchers and thinkers in the field. It is critical for any school community to come together and explore the range of strategies together and then make collaborative decisions in selecting a small number of them—eight to ten or so—to use across the school by all instructional staff as needed. These should include those useful in content area subjects as well as in the literacy program. Where a common set of strategies has been decided upon, these strategies are typically taught in the literacy program and then also used, as appropriate and as needed, across the subjects. Students become familiar with these strategies and can ultimately employ some of them on their own. This latter point is critical. We encourage a 'gradual release of responsibility' model in which the teacher begins with direct instruction (I do), guides the whole class in practice (we do), moves students to work in pairs or small groups to continue practice with less teacher supervision (you do together), and finally lifts the support when students are ready to apply the strategy on their own (you do—on your own, as needed, always).

A School-Wide Approach to Embedding Good Vocabulary Practice *(Grabe, 2009)*

1. Prioritize instruction so that key activities are practiced consistently and systematically over time. (Vocabulary learning is a long-term incremental process.)
2. Provide vocabulary exposures in multiple contexts. Teach different words in different ways (e.g., words for which students know synonyms, words that can be explained well with definitions and examples, words that represent new or complex concepts).
3. Teach words while working with the reading texts that they come from. Teach at the point of contact; use discussion around texts to teach vocabulary.
4. Read aloud to students and draw their attention to key words while reading.
5. Develop procedures for selecting words to teach.
6. Teach a limited set of key words for depth, precision, and multiple encounters.
7. Focus on word relationships (part-of-speech variations, word families, synonyms, antonyms, graded relations).
8. Provide word instruction that combines contextual information and definitional information (word-part information, cognates, context cues, affix information, flash cards, imagery).
9. Help students learn word-part information and apply it to greater word awareness.
10. Use visual supports and mapping techniques.
11. Work with dictionary definitions and rewrite more accessible definitions.
12. Develop activities that recycle a lot of words at one time (e.g., sorting words into lists, semantic mapping, matching activities, word recognition fluency activities, repeated reading practice).
13. Create a vocabulary-rich environment.
14. Raise student awareness of words: Have students collect, keep, use, and share words they want. Talk about words and build word consciousness and word interest.
15. Recycle vocabulary over time to ensure multiple exposures to words throughout vocabulary instruction (rereading prior texts for new purposes, having students nominate words to work with, adding words from prior units as part of sorting, classifying, and connecting activities).
16. Give students some choices in word learning.
17. Develop student motivation for word collecting and provide a supportive learning environment.

These principles represent important ideas culled from vocabulary research for building vocabulary-learning curriculum, one that will also support development of reading comprehension.

What is the connection between vocabulary and reading comprehension? While vocabulary is a critical feature of literacy, there has been growing interest in the last few decades on the role that vocabulary plays in reading comprehension. Stanovich *(1986)* has discussed the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension, arguing that growing vocabulary leads to better reading comprehension while increasing the volume of reading causes vocabulary to grow. According to Biemiller *(2005)* reading print and understanding words are the two conditions needed for success in reading 'grade-level' books. "For adequate reading comprehension from Grade 3 on, children require both fluent word recognition skills, and an average or greater vocabulary. The presence of these two accomplishments does not guarantee a high level of reading comprehension, but the absence of either word recognition or adequate vocabulary insures a low level of reading comprehension."

What is the *Matthew Effect* and why is it important? Children who come to school knowing fewer words than their peers will build less vocabulary throughout their time in school *(Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997)*. In fact, the more these students interact with complex texts, the more drastically they will fall behind *(Chall, 1990)*. This phenomenon, also known as The Matthew Effect, is used to describe the process in which readers who struggle early on will continue to fall further behind as they progress through school unless explicit interventions take place—ideally as early as possible. While this phenomenon pertains to all areas of reading development, it is perhaps seen most dramatically when the vocabulary of strong readers is compared to that of struggling readers. Of particular concern is that many students from poor backgrounds already come to school with far less exposure to words than their middle-class peers *(Hart and Risley, 1995)*. The task is clear: address gaps early and well to avoid a widening of these gaps. Avoiding Matthew Effects in reading is a major reason why building vocabulary is such a critical goal in literacy instruction.

What is the best way to use this practice guide? Teachers are buffeted by the wealth of information in this area, yet progress often remains elusive. Whether they teach children who come with vocabulary gaps or children who come with a rich vocabulary bank, teachers still need to know the best and most efficient ways to build this critical area. A coherent approach to vocabulary learning must combine some understanding of how students are likely to learn words as a result of direct instruction, a systematic approach to appropriate word selection, many opportunities for students to practice and use the words being learned, and a vocabulary-rich environment in the classroom. Students also need to develop effective independent word-learning strategies, become metacognitively aware of words, and be strongly motivated to learn words, both through instruction and independently. The end goal is to ensure that key words are overlearned so that they are strongly embedded, that large numbers of related words are learned, that students appreciate the power of words, and that they become lifelong collectors of words.

This practice guide is intended for use across the grades, although the target vocabulary used within the strategies is obviously different at each grade level, in each lesson, and for the differentiated needs of students. The activities specify the suggested grade range for each strategy. While research has shown that vocabulary development requires both explicit and implicit instruction, the focus in this guide is largely on explicit strategies, most of which are intended to be used in a gradual release of responsibility model. This means that teaching the strategy starts with direct explicit instruction, includes whole-group practice under the teacher's guidance, moves on to practice with peers with less teacher control, and should ultimately lead to independent and consistent use of the strategy on the part of the student.

Selecting Words to Teach

Where to Begin Selecting Words to Teach? Vocabulary develops both with and without the teacher's intervention. We know that wide reading can create a significant boost to a student's vocabulary level. We know that direct instruction plays a significant role as well. Because this publication focuses largely on direct instruction, selecting which specific words to teach must be addressed. In some cases, this requires that teachers know their students well, both in the aggregate and individually. When selecting a story for instruction, this knowledge of the student is critical in deciding which words would be challenging and get in the way of comprehending the text. These words, typically no more than five to eight in a lesson, might be 'frontloaded'—introduced and defined prior to reading *(Bransford, J.D., Sherwood, R.D., Hasselbring, T.S., Kizner, C.K., Williams, S.M., 1990)*. While there are protocols that suggest that words can also be taught during the course of reading instruction—as the challenging words come up, frontloading is a more typical instructional protocol. If a school is using a published program, vocabulary to teach is typically specified in the program (of course, teachers should use their knowledge of students to determine if these are indeed the right words on which to spend their time). Schools producing their own literacy units must make decisions as to which words require introduction and which can be inferred from context. Additionally, many resources exist that provide lists of vocabulary within categories and, especially, lists of academic vocabulary critical for academic learning.

What is the role of context? Teachers are often faced with the decision to either teach specific words or let students determine the meaning from context. Use of context can be taught—up to a point—and care must be taken to assure that there is actually sufficient context provided in the text that enables children to determine the meaning of novel words. This practice guide contains one strategy for using context, but there are many professional publications that provide similar guidance. Students, however, do need to be taught the metacognitive skills that will help develop their ability to determine when context can help them and when it cannot.

What are the categories to consider when selecting words to teach? Isabel L. Beck and colleagues (*2013*) have developed a valuable framework for determining which words provide the most leverage. They have established that there are three categories, or tiers, of words to consider when deciding which words to teach. Tier I words are the everyday words most used, and these are largely known to students. These are the conversational words that are needed to navigate daily life and provide the core structure of both narrative and expository text—words such as home, store, hello, walk, talk, feel, etc. Beyond this first tier are Tier II words. These are the words particularly necessary for success in school, and are notably useful across the content areas. Among these are words such as compare, infer, discover, experiment, describe, etc. Finally, we have Tier III words, which are extremely domain specific. These include words most associated with a specific discipline, such as science, history, or math—words such as synapses, arterial, venous, (right) angle, array, tessellation, etc. In choosing discrete words to teach, this framework recommends that we spend our instructional efforts mainly on Tier II words, although this does not imply that you would not address words in other tiers when these are needed for comprehension and unknown to the student.

How can *Vocabulary Filters* be used to identify words to teach? The protocol below provides a process for identifying words to teach using 5 Filters *(developed by Nagy and Hiebert, 2011)* a protocol based on word features such as conceptual difficulty, familiarity, and the semantic networks to which words belong.

Begin by conducting a review of the texts/unit and list all the words that you think merit instruction. Then apply the following "filters" to the words selected:

Filter 1: Familiar Words

Are students already familiar with the concept?
Example: *If a student knows the word **looked**, the word **peered** need not be the focus for instruction. (If you are teaching synonyms, you can pair these words of course, but for purposes of teaching vocabulary within this framework you would not need to put the time into teaching this word as the concept is already known.)*

Filter 2: Highly Concrete Words

Can the word be easily associated or explained using a picture? If so, then these words are not targeted for instruction.
Example: *Showing a student a picture of an **alligator** will readily make the animal known.*

After applying Filters 1 and 2, the remaining words are considered the "focus words" for instruction and can be taught utilizing the remaining filters below.

Filter 3: Word Meaning Family

What does the word mean as a member of a semantic network?
Example: *The word **requested** can be connected to other words such as: asked, appealed, demanded, and told.*

Filter 4: Word Part Family

How is the word meaning affected by deletions/additions of morphemes (prefixes, roots, and suffixes)?
Example: *The word **accompaniment** is connected to the words **accompany, accompanied, unaccompanied,** and **company**.*

Filter 5: Word Changes

Does the word have multiple meanings? Is it used in idioms?
Example: *"I stopped to look at the house half hidden in the tree, the gray porch tacked on the front, screens **bellying** out…." The word **bellying**, which comes from belly, a noun, is used in the sentence as a verb and means protruding or sticking out.*

Building Vocabulary: A Sampling of Instructional Methods

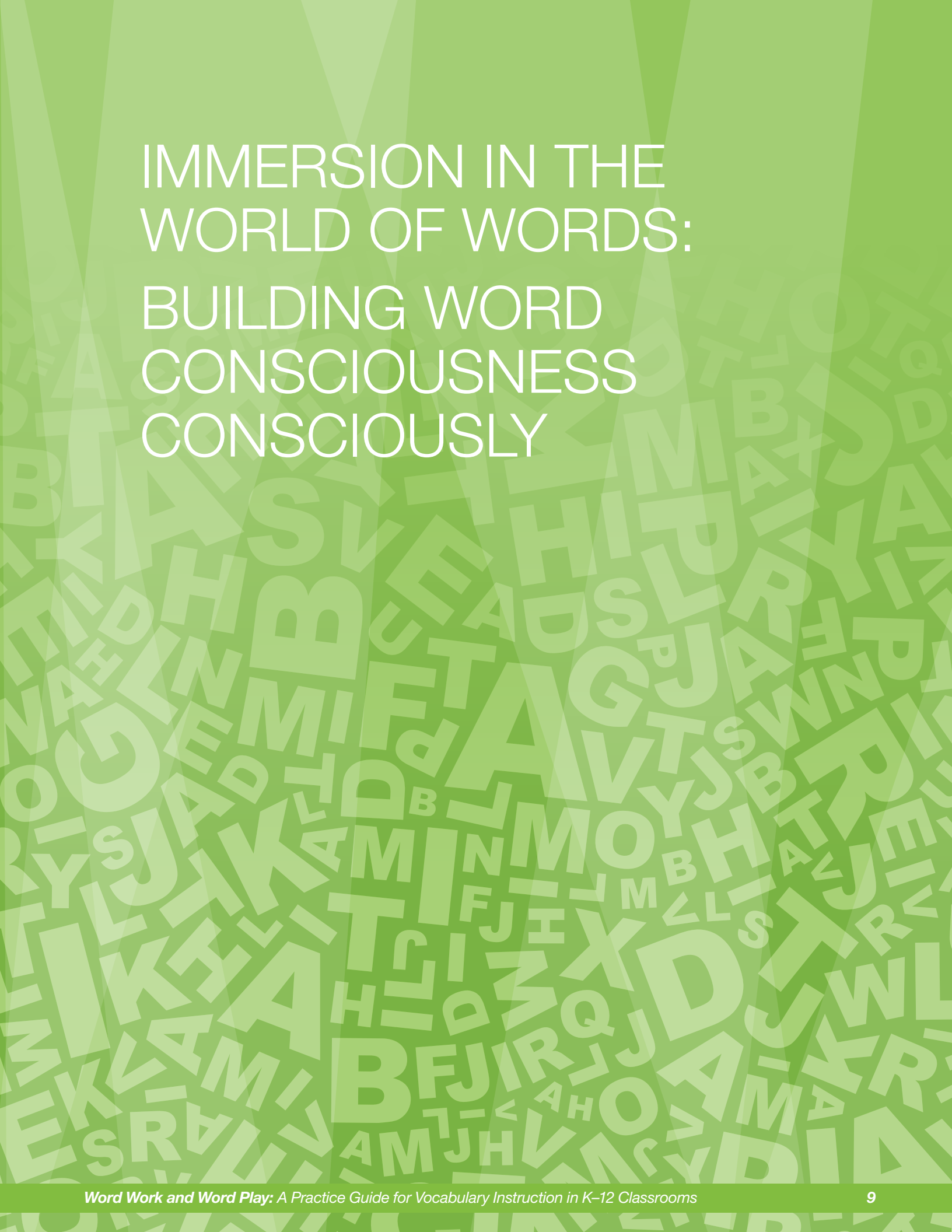
This section is designed to provide practitioners with a range of clearly described methods that can be used in classrooms, in small-group settings, and with individual students to increase acquisition and retention of vocabulary. While this practice guide does not specify which words to teach, it does provide guidance in this regard in the resources section. What is provided is not a script, but strategies that have been validated in both research and practice. Thus, some might be familiar.

Schools are encouraged to approach vocabulary as a school community rather than have individual teachers take on the formidable task of building student vocabulary on their own. Learning a range of strategies in a collaborative format allows teachers and administrators to decide which words are useful, as a group, across the school. While vocabulary strategies can be taught in the English language arts class, once students know how to apply a strategy, it can be applied across subject areas. Thus all teachers in a school can use those that apply to their disciplines. Because research indicates it is not just word knowledge, but also world knowledge that improves comprehension *(Bauman, 2005)*, building vocabulary within the disciplines becomes all the more urgent, especially for students who struggle with reading. This is important for all students, but particularly critical for students who are challenged in this area.

When it comes to research-based strategies, there is always an emphasis on fidelity to the original model. Yet a given strategy will not always yield the same results. Because of the nuances in the real world of classrooms, caveats are provided in some cases. Think of these as considerations, but do not let them discourage the use of any strategy that seems to fit the need.

Where possible, student samples are included. In the web version of this guide, annotated video clips demonstrating the strategies as well as additional resources and student work samples will be added over time. However, the strategy selections in this practice guide are ready to use and putting them into practice is the best way to become adept in their use. Remember also that the goal is for students to learn the strategies and ultimately use many of them on their own as they navigate information from text and from other sources. We do stress that none of the activities which contain templates be used as worksheets. Vocabulary instruction requires conversation and distributed practice. Silent practice is unlikely to yield results.

IMMERSION IN THE WORLD OF WORDS: BUILDING WORD CONSCIOUSNESS CONSCIOUSLY



Building Word Consciousness

There is no recipe for building word consciousness, but there are many ways that teachers can engage their students in becoming aware of the role and power of words. A classroom that has a good amount of print that is both displayed ***and referred to*** is an important first step. Another is having systems for students to become collectors of words. A personal dictionary or thesaurus, a box of 'collector cards' of words and their meanings, a whole-class 'big book' dictionary of meaningful words in a current unit or book being read, categorized vocabulary charts, semantic gradients (more on these later) in which fine distinctions between synonymous words are explored, and a wealth of other activities can make students more conscious of words and word choices. Additionally, a classroom where words are valued is one in which students have many opportunities to talk to each other, either in guided or spontaneous experiences. These provide the opportunities for using new vocabulary in varied ways.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	x
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	x

Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Word Consciousness in Practice

1. Create a word-rich environment with word posters, vocabulary charts, and a wide collection of texts in classroom libraries.
2. Promote word consciousness by modeling the use of sophisticated language and by deliberately pointing out to students interesting words in texts, speech, etc.
3. Include word choice, especially precise and varied word choice, as a component in writing instruction and encourage students to try out new language in their writing.
4. Encourage students to note new or interesting language they hear or see, including through the use of logs or journals. Provide opportunities for them to bring these to the attention of teachers and peers.

Example 1: Newspaper Weather Report

In building a culture of word consciousness a great deal rests on the teacher's own enthusiasm for language. Something as simple as bringing interesting words from a weather report to the attention of the class can provide opportunities to explore multiple meanings of words, as in the example below. In this example, the teacher has noticed some interesting words in a place where she least expected them: the weather report in the daily newspaper. She realized that the simple sentence, "The wind will slacken," presents a challenge to some of her students. She displays the weather report to the class and brings the relevant sentence to everyone's attention.

Weather Report—Metropolitan Forecast

Today—Mostly cloudy

High 44

The wind will slacken as the storm moves away from the New England coast...

Accuweather Report, March 2, 2010, permission granted

She proceeds to speak about the various meanings of the word 'slacken' and provides some quick direct instruction of the word part family along with some examples:

The wind will slacken.

My lip was slack from the shot the dentist gave me.

He used to be a slacker, but he works hard now.

Do not slack off before the task is done.

If you slack off, the project will not be completed.

Students are provided with opportunities to speak to each other and practice using the word. Over the next few weeks, the teacher encourages the students to use the word in various contexts and notes or compliments the use of the word when students use it on their own. While this is one way a teacher can share her habit of noticing interesting words to her students, there are many other ways to do so. Ultimately, building a culture of word consciousness is about finding ways to stress both the importance of words and the pleasure they can bring as they are explored.

Example 2: Alphabetic Word Collection

Before instruction begins, students list words and phrases they know about a given topic on a chart. As students engage in the unit of study, they are given the opportunity to add to their charts with new or interesting words they encounter. They list these in alphabetically ordered boxes for easy accessibility. For younger students, there should be a word box for each letter of the alphabet. For older students, a range of letters can be accommodated in each box as in the illustration below. This is similar to a KWL (What do you **Know**, what do you **Want** to learn, what did you **Learn**) chart. The initial responses also provide the teacher with an assessment of student background knowledge on the topic.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	x
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	

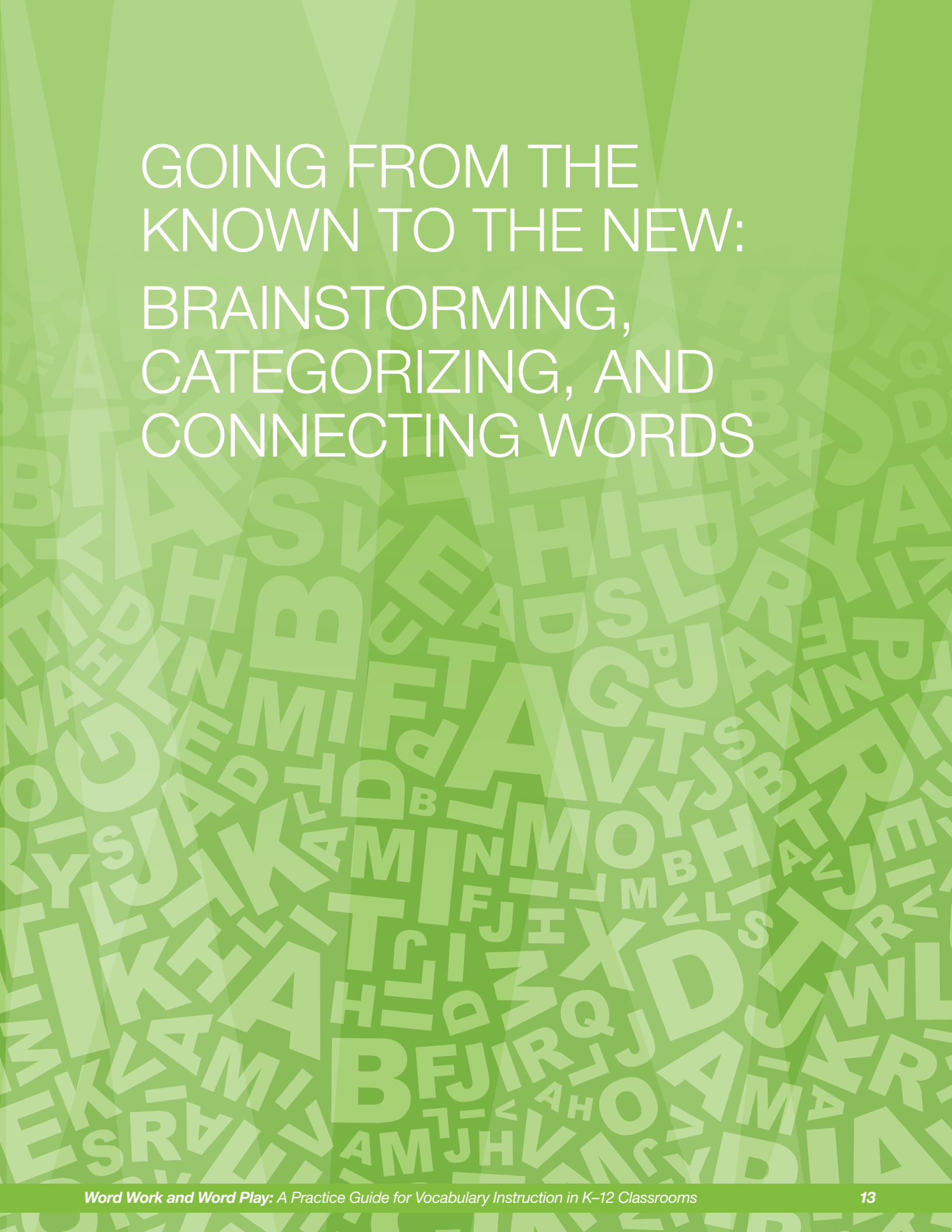
Before Reading	x
During Reading	
After Reading	x

Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

TOPIC: Desert		
A—B arid barren	**C—D** cactus dry	**E—F**
G—H granules	**I—J** irrigation iguana	**K—L** lizards Komodo dragon
M—N mirage	**O—P**	**Q—R**
S—T	**U—V**	**W—X**
Y—Z		

Adapted From:
Frey, N. & Fisher, D. (2009)

GOING FROM THE KNOWN TO THE NEW: BRAINSTORMING, CATEGORIZING, AND CONNECTING WORDS



Category (a.k.a. Semantic) Maps

This activity helps young children learn and expand word concepts through categories. Students can expand their vocabulary by categorizing related descriptive words with the five senses.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x
Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	x
Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	x
6–12	x

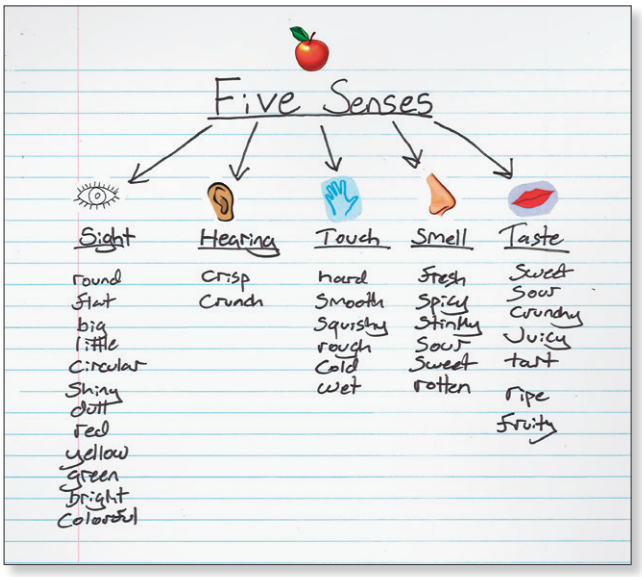
Procedure:

Read aloud and then discuss a text about the five senses, (for example, *My Five Senses* by Aliki). Present the class with a familiar object such as an orange or an apple. Have the children use their senses to describe the fruit. Prompt them by asking sensory questions such as: ***What does the fruit look like? Does it make a sound? How does it feel? Does it have a smell? How does it taste?*** Write the children's responses on the prepared chart. Write the children's ideas on the chart while reading them aloud; place the words where they belong within the five sense categories. Help the children understand that they are using their five senses to describe the object. Elicit as many descriptive words as possible. Explain that we use certain words to describe what our senses perceive. Repeat the activity with different objects throughout the year. Post the chart and use it as an interactive learning tool for growing vocabulary. Provide opportunities for the children to use the words in their daily conversations. **Continue to add to the chart** as any appropriate content comes up. Graphic organizers of this type are meant to keep growing as more examples are added.

Supporting Research:

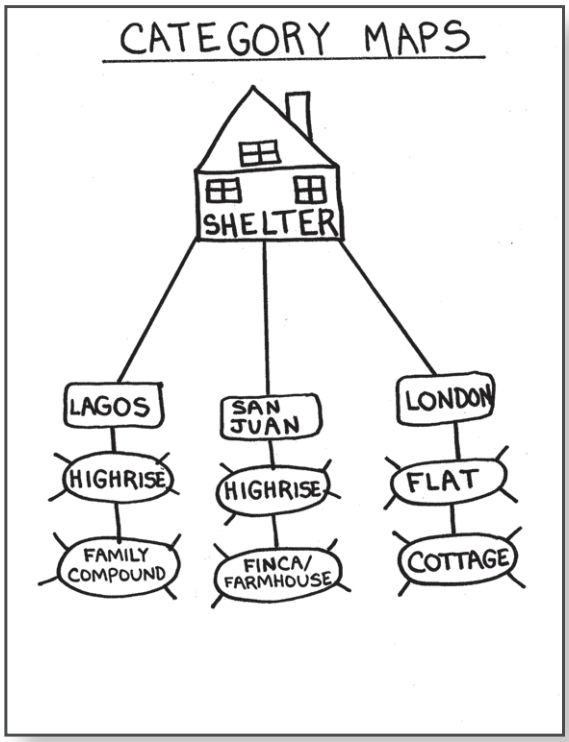
Johnson, D.D., Toms-Bronowski, S., & Pittelman, S.D. (1982)

Five Senses Chart



Teacher and Student Samples

Category maps lend themselves to organizing many different kinds of information. In the map to the right, third-grade social studies content is organized with spokes left open so descriptors can be added as new learning occurs. For example, the spokes around the word "shanty" provide opportunities to describe what a shanty is (flimsy, drafty, a kind of hut, etc.). Here the class is studying communities around the world and specifically looking at shelter within those communities. By categorizing the information in this way, students can quickly move into comparing and contrasting the information. In this example, the blank map is initially provided to students as a scaffold for organizing and adding information being taught. Keep in mind that in a gradual release model, students eventually create their own category maps to help them keep track of information they are organizing.



A Category Map Describing Characteristics of Humans, Felines, and Equines			
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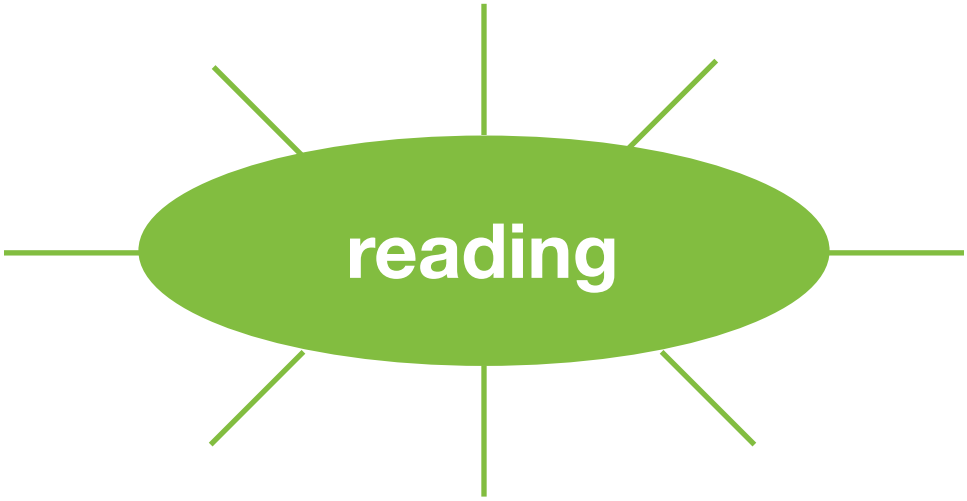
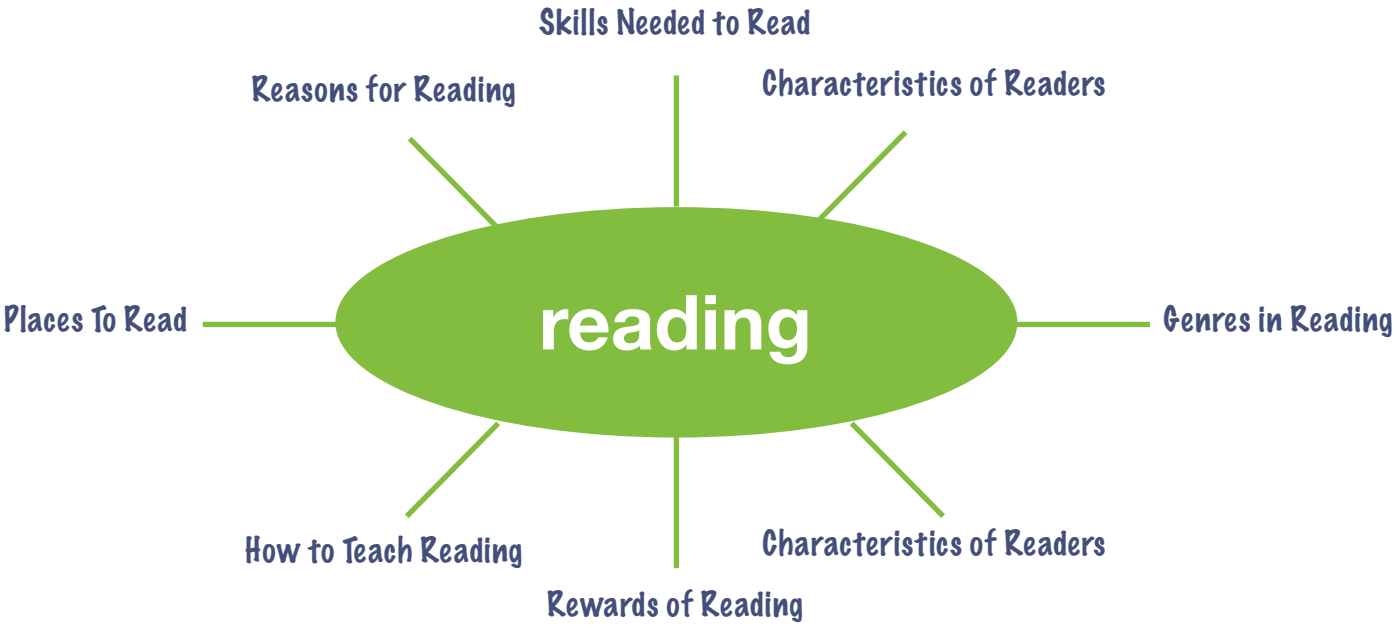
Family Grouping	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*
Use of Tools	*Yes*	*Occasional*	*No*
Social Behavior	*Live in colonies*	*Live in family groups*	*Live in herds*
Logical Thinking	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*

Open-ended maps, such as those below, start with a single concept. The class is told to brainstorm what they know about the topic (essentially calling out—brainstorming should not be slowed down by raising hands for permission to speak). As they call out, the teacher writes the word next to a spoke, grouping words that go together. Soon the students see how the teacher is categorizing and may argue about where a particular word might go. The teacher's response should typically be "talk me into it" and there should be some meaningful discussion about why a word should go with one group of related words or another.

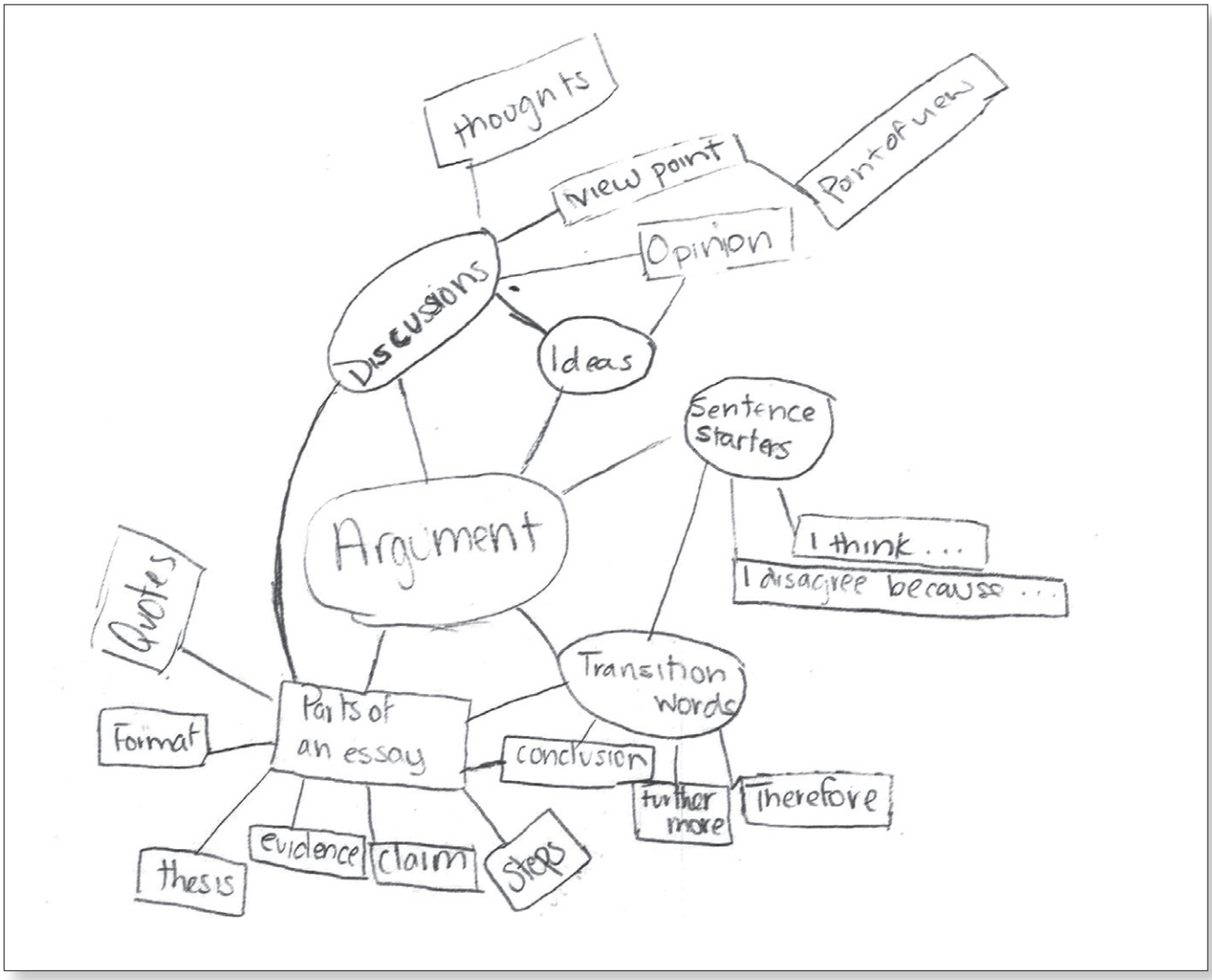
Once the brainstorming is complete, the teacher asks the students to label each group using the word in the center of the map. The category titles below might include "reasons for reading," "genres in reading," "components of reading instruction," etc.



For students who require greater support, the categories can be provided initially by the teacher, but should be lifted as soon as students can manage reasonably well without them.



Keep in mind that the goal of these strategies is for students to do the maps on their own as a way of organizing their thinking by brainstorming and then categorizing concepts, as in the example below.



Comments

- The use of category maps can be modified for use in all grades by starting out with basic vocabulary and then encouraging more sophisticated vocabulary. For example, the use of the words *sharp* or *pungent* to describe the smell of the orange in the five senses example.
- For younger children, provide opportunities to create semantic maps using pictures or drawings.
- Remember that these semantic maps are never actually complete. They are designed to be used from time to time when something new is learned and can be added. Avoid using them only for review. Category maps are a dynamic part of the vocabulary-building efforts in a school.
- Keep in mind that after any whole-class, small-group, or individual brainstorming session, the results can serve as an assessment tool for the teacher. If students are asked to brainstorm a topic and there is a very limited response, assume that the level of knowledge of that word or concept is limited. This means frontloading of information is needed. Conversely, if a great deal of information is generated, especially high-level information, assume that the students have strong background knowledge of the topic.

List-Group-Label

List-group-label is a strategy to generate word knowledge as well as help students understand more about a central concept by organizing related words. Students brainstorm words, categorize them into related groups, and name each group.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	
After Reading	x

Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

1. **List:** students independently brainstorm a list of words related to a word provided by the teacher.
2. **Group:** working as a whole class, in pairs or small groups, students combine their word lists and begin to sort the words into logical categories. Student can eliminate words, but should strive to create several categories of words.
3. **Label:** once the groups have created categories, students should determine a label for each category.

Examples:

1. **List:**

Farming		
Cows	Tractor	Milk
Sheep	Pitchfork	Fields
Corn	Barns	Chickens
Plow	Horses	Wheat
Crops	Pigs	Eggs
	Silo	

2. **Group:**

Farming			
Cows	Plow	Wheat	Barns
Sheep	Tractor	Corn	Crops
Chickens	Pitchfork	Milk	Fields
Horses		Eggs	Silo
Pigs			

3. Label:

Farming			
Animals on the Farm	**Things Farmers Use**	**Farming Products**	**Things Seen on a Farm**
Cows	Plow	Wheat	Barns
Sheep	Tractor	Corn	Crops
Chickens	Pitchfork	Milk	Fields
Horses		Eggs	Silo
Pigs			

Sources:
Allen, J. (2007)
Video of the strategy: www.readingrockets.org/strategies/list_group_label
Lenski, S. D., Wham, M. A., & Johns, J. L. (1999)
Taba, H. (1967)
Tierney, R.J. & Readence, J.E. (2000)
Allen, J. (2007)
Allen, J. (DOE)

Why use graphic organizers in the form of semantic maps to build vocabulary? When children brainstorm, they hear novel words used by their peers. They see these words categorized with similar words, giving them some information about the new word. Additionally, they have opportunities to review words they have had some exposure to. When done well, these sorts of maps involve a great deal of discussion—and listening and speaking are important tools in building and solidifying vocabulary.

There are many worthwhile variations of category maps and semantic organizers. Typically, it is the text or the nature of the concepts being grouped that determines the type of organizer to use. Those above are good examples with which to start. A few others follow that are useful as well.

Concept Boxes

The use of a concept box or circle helps students conceptually relate words to each other. Concept circles give students an opportunity to categorize and justify connections between and among words. In this strategy, a circle or box is divided into sections; each section has words, phrases, or sentences that describe an overarching topic. The topic can be an object, phenomenon, idea, etc. Students are encouraged to think, talk, or write about the connections they see between sections. Concept circles can be constructed with either pictures or words.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	
During Reading	x
After Reading	x

Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

1. Put words, phrases, or sentences in the sections of a divided circle or box. Do not share the topic of the circle. (However, if your topic is 'deserts,' it might be helpful to tell students they are trying to identify a type of ecosystem.)

   Ask students about the connections they observe between the words or pictures. Students should determine the topic that connects the sections of the circle.

Type of Ecosystem:	
	
	

Type of Ecosystem:	
Sahara, Arabian, Gobi	Living conditions are hostile for most plant and animal life
An area that receives very little precipitation	The climate ranges from very hot and dry to very cold

2. **Variation:** Students are given the topic and possible descriptions of the topic. Three of the four descriptions accurately connect to the topic and one description inaccurately connects to the topic. Students must identify the section that does not belong and replace it with an accurate connection.

Type of Ecosystem: Desert	
Sahara, Arabian, Gobi	Living conditions are hostile for most plant and animal life
An area that is very humid with high precipitation	The climate ranges from very hot and dry to very cold

What does not belong: _____?

3. **Variation:** Provide students with three sections of the circle that connect to a topic. Students must identify the topic and then supply one additional connection.

Type of Ecosystem:	
Sahara, Arabian, Gobi	
An area that receives very little precipitation	The climate ranges from very hot and dry to very cold

Supporting Research:

Vacca, J.L., Vacca, R. T., & Grove, M. K. (1987).
Allen, J. (2007)

A Category Game for Reviewing Words

This activity allows students to gain a deeper understanding of vocabulary words that they have already learned. Students closely examine the different facets of meaning and identify patterns amongst the words.

USES	✔
Whole Class	
Small Group	x
Independent	
Discussion	

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	x

Assessment	
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

Students can work alone or be divided into groups and given a list of vocabulary terms that they have already learned. Students then work to identify different relationships amongst three or more of the words, and create categories that describe these relationships. Categories can be based on parts of speech, meaning, common root, etc.

Examples:

EXAMPLE 1: VOCABULARY LIST

High School Industrial Revolution Unit				
assembly line	emigration	innovate	monopoly	tenement
capital	entrepreneur	labor union	obsolete	textile
command economy	factory system	market economy	patent	traditional economy
corporation	free enterprise	mixed economy	reform	urbanization
demand	infrastructure	modernization	strike	working class

POSSIBLE CATEGORIES

High School Industrial Revolution Unit		
Category #1: Terms related to capitalism	**Category #2: Terms about production**	**Category #3: People**
capital, corporation, entrepreneur, free enterprise	assembly line, demand, factory system, patent, textile	entrepreneur, labor union, working class

EXAMPLE 2:

3rd Grade ELA (Academic Vocabulary)			
actual	brief	explore	process
advantage	consider	locate	rate
approach	convince	observe	recall
arrange	defend	origin	suitable
avoid	examine	predict	survey

POSSIBLE CATEGORIES

High School Industrial Revolution Unit		
Category #1: Research words	**Category #2: Words that tell me what I have to do (verbs)**	**Category #3: Words that describe (adjectives)**
defend, examine, explore, locate, observe, predict, suitable	arrange, avoid, consider, convince, defend, examine, explore, locate, observe, predict, process, survey	actual, brief, original, suitable

Notes/Comments:

This activity is particularly useful in content areas.

Caveat:

When using as a group activity, teachers should take special considerations. Where students are grouped homogeneously, teachers can give each group vocabulary terms that are appropriate to their level. If students are grouped heterogeneously, students can challenge each other within the groups.

Adapted from:
Allen, J. (2007)

Supporting Research:
Carleton, L. & Marzano, R.J. (2010)
Vacca, R.D., Vacca J. (1995)

Developing Word Understanding by Categorizing Through Compare and Contrast

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x
Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	x
Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

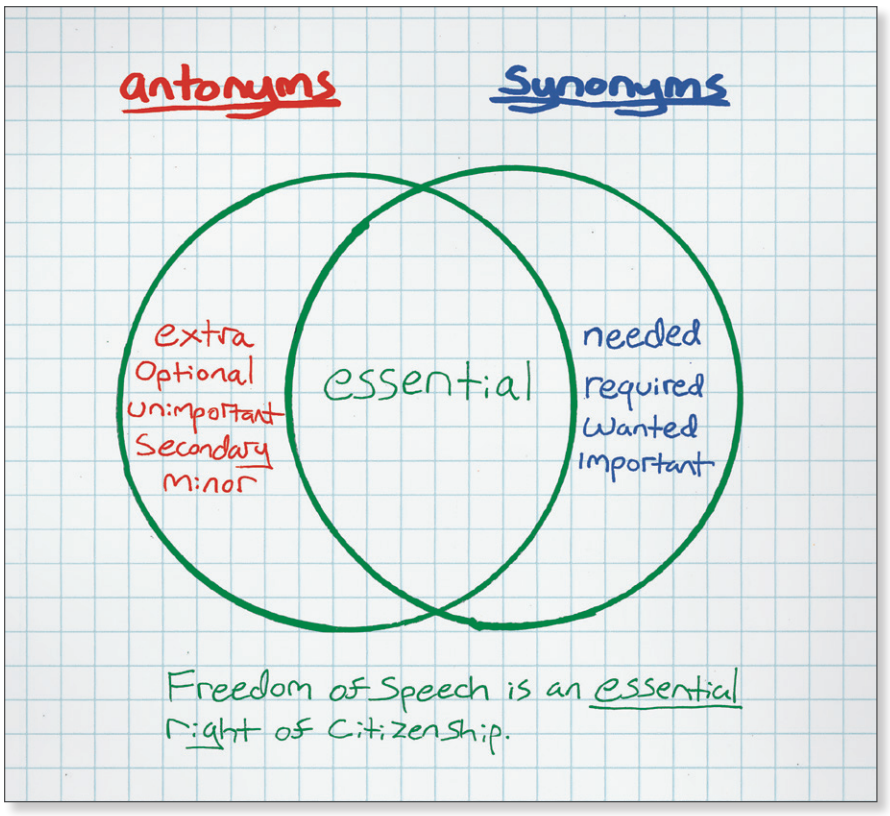
GRADE LEVEL	✔
Pre-K–5	x
Pre-K–2	x
3–5	x
6–12	x
all content areas	

This activity allows students to learn and deepen their understanding of word meanings through comparing and contrasting. Students can expand their knowledge of words by interacting with them multiple times. Using a graphic organizer such as the Venn diagram to compare and contrast ideas is a great way to help students deepen their knowledge of words by seeing their relationships.

Procedure:

Select a target word from a current text or unit of study to compare and contrast using the chart. Students also can compare and contrast words that describe big ideas such as *theme.* Write the target word in the center where the circles overlap, the antonyms on the left and the synonyms on the right. By selecting words that are closely related, teachers can help students develop a deeper understanding of words and their meanings. Use color coding to enhance similarities and differences between words. Students should have the opportunity to discuss their choices and share their rationale for selecting the synonyms and antonyms.

Example:



Have You Ever…?

This activity is used when introducing new words to students. It can serve as a means of guided practice, as it allows students to make connections between the vocabulary words and their prior knowledge and experiences.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	
After Reading	

Assessment
Content Areas

Procedure:

Students are provided a list of selected vocabulary words and the teacher (or student facilitator) formulates a series of "Have You Ever?" questions using the words, prompting the students to answer.

Example:

Vocabulary Words: debate, defend, fallacy

Sample Questions:

- Have you ever debated an issue with a classmate or friend? Explain the issue and describe what each of you said.
- Have you ever had to defend an argument you made? Describe the argument and how you defended it.
- Have you ever identified a fallacy in someone's argument? Describe the argument made and the fallacy you identified.

Notes/Comments:

This activity can be used after words have been introduced to students to allow them to practice using them in a more structured fashion rather than constructing sentences on their own. At the early stages, teachers should lead the discussion so that they can assess their students' understanding of each of the words.

Adapted From:

Beck, I., McKeown, M.G., Kuncan, L. (2013).

Possible Sentences

Possible Sentences is a pre-reading vocabulary strategy used to focus students' attention on key vocabulary prior to reading a text selection. Students infer the meaning of these key terms by examining the way they are presented in the text. Possible Sentences helps students with activating background knowledge, actively processing information in the text, and using context to determine word meaning.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	x
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	
After Reading	

Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

1. Select and list 6–8 essential and unfamiliar terms as well as 4–6 familiar words from the passage. These target words are presented to the class and each word is pronounced several times. Provide students with student-friendly definitions, drawing on student knowledge wherever possible.
2. Model how to construct a Possible Sentence by pairing any two words on the list and write a prediction sentence on a chart, an overhead transparency, or Smart Board and underline both words from the list.
3. Ask a student to co-construct the next prediction sentence by choosing another two words from the list. Write the sentence on a chart, an overhead transparency, or interactive white board and underline both words from the list.
4. In partnerships, ask students to use the remaining words and compose Possible Sentences. Students may use words already placed in previous sentences if they wish, but eventually they should include each word on the list in at least one sentence.
5. When the students have completed their sentences, ask students to share their Possible Sentences. Transcribe the sentences exactly as the students dictate, even if the information may not be accurate. This exact transcription is necessary for the evaluation phase that occurs later. The teacher continues recording sentences until a specified time period elapses, until a specified number of sentences have been created, or until students can produce no more.
6. Students read the passage to check the accuracy of their statements. As they read, they are to confirm or modify their understanding of the target words. Then, using the passage for reference, they are to evaluate each sentence written before reading the text. Which ones are accurate? Which ones need further elaboration? Which ones cannot be validated because the passage did not deal specifically with them? This evaluation calls for careful reading.
7. In a directed whole-class discussion, modify or eliminate any original sentences that are inaccurate in accordance with the information clarified during the evaluation step.
8. After evaluating and modifying the original sentences, the teacher may call for new ones. As these new sentences are dictated, other students may challenge them as inaccurate, unknowable, or incomplete and then quickly check the text for confirmation. The final, acceptable statements then should be copied into the students' notebooks or folders.

Examples:

Target Words	
Bomb	**Tet Offensive**
War	**Communist**
Domino Theory	**President Kennedy**
Viet Cong	**Troops**

Possible Sentences:

The **Domino Theory** is about creating **bombs**.

Communists caused the **war**.

President Kennedy and the **Viet Cong** are enemies.

Assigned Passage:

"Events in Vietnam" – www.teachervision.com/tv/printables/TCR/1576901009_318-321.pdf

Final Modified Sentences:

The **Domino Theory** worried **President Kennedy**.

The Vietnam **War** was waged to combat the **Communists**.

North Vietnam and its **Viet Cong** allies launched the **Tet Offensive**.

Comments:

When using activities such as *Possible Sentences* that are dependent on context, take great care to select only unfamiliar key terms that have meanings that can be easily grasped from the text. Although directing students' attention to context is important and often the only way a term can be understood, other more concrete activities may be more advantageous. Vocabulary such as the parts of a flower (stamen, pistil, anther, filament, petal) might be explored by illustrating and labeling them as well as using films, pictures, simulations, and real experiences which will typically make concepts vivid and memorable.

Adapted from:
Moore, D.W., & Moore, S.A. (1986); Stahl, S.A., & Kapinus, B.A. (1991)

Semantic Feature Analysis

Semantic Feature Analysis is a process in which words are analyzed for the purpose of connecting them with like words. For example, when introducing a new word such as 'elated' or 'despondent,' we might use a semantic feature analysis to show how these words are similar to 'happy' and 'sad' respectively—but a more intensive form of the word (a.k.a., strong on the semantic gradient scale).

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	x
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	
After Reading	x

Assessment	
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

1. Create a list of words in the category being explored, adding at the end of the list the new target words. In the example below, words related to emotions are being analyzed. The list begins with words likely to be known to the students and to this are added the new words. At the top of the chart are examples of things that characterize the known words, such as winning a ball game or taking a test. These examples can be elicited from the class (for example, what is something that can make you sad/happy/afraid/proud?) or provided by the teacher. The initial chart might look like the one below:

Emotions	Winning a ball game	Having an argument with a friend	Going on a school trip	Getting caught in a thunderstorm	Breaking up with a girl/ boyfriend
Happy					
Sad					
Afraid					
Proud					
Excited					
Elated					
Despondent					

2. The class then completes the analysis by doing a yes or no (depicted as pluses or minuses) response going across the chart. Students might not fully agree on whether a word warrants a yes or a no and the class can discuss this. The teacher's role is to say, "talk me into it" and have the class arrive at a consensus. When completed, the semantic feature analysis might look like the one below:

Emotions	Winning a ball game	Having an argument with a friend	Going on a school trip	Getting caught in a thunderstorm	Breaking up with a girl/ boyfriend
Happy	+	-	+	-	-
Sad	-	+	-	+	+
Afraid	-	+	-	+	+
Proud	+	-	+	-	-
Excited	+	-	+	-	-
Elated	+	-	+	-	-
Despondent	-	+	-	+	+

3. The class then analyzes the chart to see which words share common features (meaning which ones share pluses and minuses). As can be seen in the chart above, happy and sad are opposite in their features because they are, in fact, opposites in meaning. In analyzing which words share common features, the word **elated** shares common features with the word **happy** and the word **despondent** shares common features with the word **sad**. This provides a good conversation to kick off or reinforce the idea of synonyms along a semantic gradient continuum.

Supporting Research:
Anders, P.L. & Bos, C.S. (1986)

Word Sandwiches

A related activity that also looks at synonymous variations in words is the use of word sandwiches. When creating these, students attach new words to known words as they analyze and review them. Both semantic feature analysis and activities such as word sandwiches essentially come back to the practice of going from the known to the new. In the case of word sandwiches, students place the new word (in a different color) between known words. As a variation, or for students who struggle with word-level reading challenges, the new word might be placed beside an icon.

really angry **livid** furious	follow, obey **adhere** stick, cling
catch **intercept** interrupt	exaggeration **hyperbole** overstatement

 **obelisk**	 **tome**

Cognates: Categorizing Words in Different Languages Derived from a Common Source

Purpose:

Cognates are words in two languages that share a common origin. They often have a similar meaning, spelling, and/or pronunciation. Research shows that when a student's first language shares cognates with English, capitalizing on their knowledge of these cognates can help build vocabulary for English language learners. This "transfer" has been identified by research as an important process in acquiring a second language. For example, the large number of cognate pairs found in Spanish and English afford the possibility for transfer to occur for a meaningful number of words. Thus, teaching Spanish-literate students to take advantage of their knowledge of cognates is a powerful tool as students are likely to know the concept in Spanish but simply lack the English label.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	
During Reading	x
After Reading	x

Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Procedure:
(using an example for Spanish-speaking students):

1. Teach students that cognates are words in two languages that share a similar meaning, spelling, and/or pronunciation. Spanish speakers can use their knowledge of their first language to help them learn many words in English.

2. Select a text for shared reading or read the text aloud to the students. When you come to a preselected cognate, pause to discuss the cognate. Model and point out the differences between the English and Spanish words. Think aloud what the word might mean based on knowledge of Spanish. Model how to chart the cognate pairs and their similarities and differences on the Cognate Pairs Chart.

3. Continue reading and ask students to listen carefully as you read. Ask students to raise their hands when they think they hear a cognate. Pause the reading and discuss the cognate. Point out the differences you hear between the Spanish and English words. Continue to chart cognate pairs.

4. Stop the read-aloud at a predetermined spot in the text. Group students in pairs or triads and ask them to finish reading the text. Tell students to watch for cognates as they read and to use their knowledge of Spanish as a tool for understanding the English words. Ask them to identify any additional cognate pairs in the text and chart them on their Cognate Pairs Chart.

5. When students have completed their task, have them share their charts and discuss any questions they have.

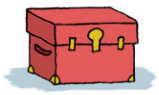
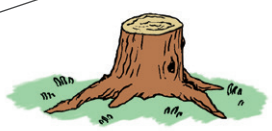
   - For a list of cognates: spanishcognates.org/
   - For a list of false cognates: spanishcognates.org/blog/top-20-false-cognates-esl-students

Example:

Cognate Pairs Chart				
English Word	**Spanish Word**	**How do they look alike?**	**How do they look different?**	**What do the words mean?**
astronaut	astronauta	astronaut	astronaut + a	
program	programa	program	program + a	

Comments:

- It is important to note that while English language learners may bring linguistic knowledge in the area of cognates to their second language learning, they still need to learn the meaning of basic words. These are the words native English speakers began school knowing, what Beck and colleagues *(2002)* label Tier 1 words.
- To inform selection of words, consider the work of Calderon, et al. *(2003)* in their modification of McKeown and Beck's three-tier system into four:
  - Tier 1 words are words that require little or no instruction and include basic words ELLs need to communicate, read, and write (e.g., speak, good), cognates, and false cognates.
  - Tier 2 words, similar to McKeown and Beck's Tier 2, are words that not cognates and include cognates that are difficult to recognize (e.g., idiom/modismo, assist/ayudar).
  - Tier 2 Sub-Category words are words that need to be explicitly taught and include the high-frequency words in the students' reading and listening comprehension texts. Many words in this tier are McKeown and Beck's Tier 1 words. They are information processing words and phrases that nest Tier 3 words in long sentences—polysemous words, (power, trunk, ring, etc.), transition words, connectors, (therefore, moreover, over the course of, etc.), more sophisticated words for rich discussions and specificity in descriptions (declare, precise, ire, etc.), and idioms. Calderon's Tier 2 excludes many of the words included in McKeown and Beck's Tier 2 because they were clear and obvious cognates (e.g., efficiently/eficientenmente, morale/moral).
  - Tier 3 corresponds to McKeown and Beck's Tier 3. They are low-frequency words and limited to specific domains.

A polysemous S.E.E.D activity as "Do Now" the day following explicit direct instruction	
Sentences My mother puts our winter clothes away in the trunk. The olive tree trunk is thick and tall.	**Explanation** A container, usually with a lid, for holding clothes and other things. The thick main stem of a tree.
Examples Toy trunk Car trunk Palm tree trunk Maple tree trunk	**Drawing**  

Adapted From:

August, D., Carlo, M., Dressler, C., & Snow, C. (2005)

Calderón, M., and D. August, R. Slavin, D. Duran, N. Madden, A. Cheung 2003)

Nagy, W.E., and G.E. García, A. Dyrgunoglu, B. Hancin (1993)

SHADES OF MEANING: BUILDING BREADTH AND DEPTH IN WORD KNOWLEDGE BY LEARNING TO MAKE PRECISE AND NUANCED WORD CHOICES

Semantic Gradients—
Taking the Temperature of Words

Semantic gradients are a way to broaden and deepen students' understanding of related words by considering a continuum of words by order of degree. Semantic gradients often begin with antonyms, or opposites, at each end of the continuum and students work to list or arrange words in a gradient of meanings between these. This strategy helps students distinguish between shades of meaning. By enhancing their vocabulary, students can be more precise and imaginative in their writing. In particular, semantic gradients can help students identify an array of words of similar meanings that they can use in selecting more precise words in their own writing.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	x
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	
During Reading	x
After Reading	x

Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Procedure: How to use semantic gradients

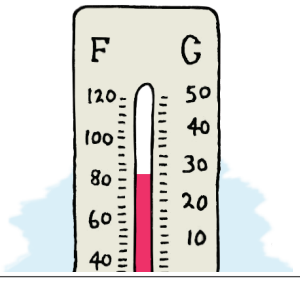
1. Select a pair of polar opposite words.
2. Generate at least five synonyms for each of the opposite words.
3. Arrange the words in a way that makes a bridge from one opposite word to the other. Continuums can be done horizontally or vertically, in a ladder-like fashion.
4. Have students discuss their rationale for placing certain words in certain locations. Teachers should always encourage a conversation about the subtle differences among the words.

OR

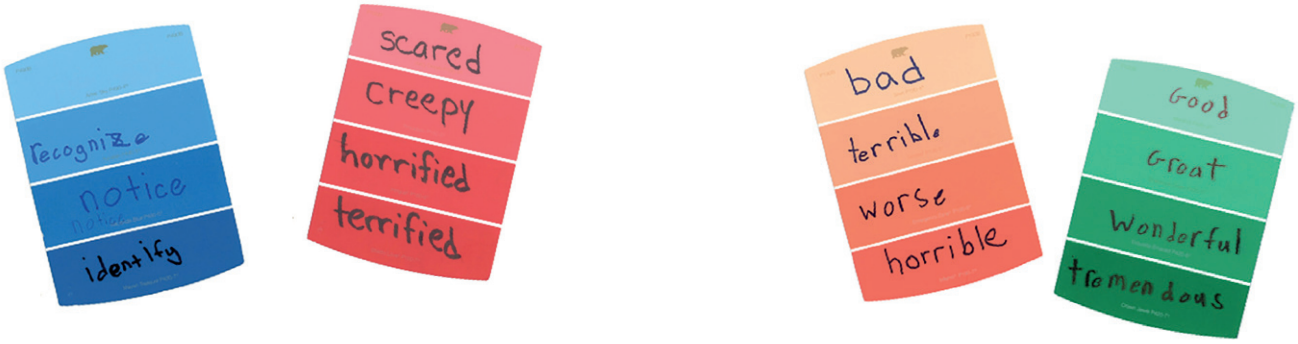
1. Select a specific vocabulary word, for example, "large."
2. Using a familiar book that has been read, a unit of study, or different writing samples, create a list of semantically similar words. The teacher can develop the list, or work collaboratively with students to generate the list. It may work best to think of the target word as the center of the continuum.
3. Arrange the words in a way that illustrates an understanding of each word's meaning. Continuums can be horizontal or vertical, in a ladder like fashion. Paint chips/samples work well for this procedure.
4. Have students discuss their rationale for placing certain words in certain locations. Encourage a conversation about the subtle differences among the words.

Teacher Examples for Instruction:

boiling ↔ hot ↔ warm ↔ tepid ↔ cool ↔ cold ↔ freezing

	warm	warmer	warmest
	cold	icy	freezing

Student Examples:



When introduced to semantic gradients, this nine-year-old did not quite get the idea of degrees of meaning and thought of them as synonyms, which they are (see blue example above). After additional instruction and examples, he started to see that the task was, indeed, to find synonyms—but with a twist. They had to increase in intensity (as they do in the teacher examples and in his examples above) so that the most precise word could be selected from the list to be used in a relevant sentence. In using these in his own writing and revising, he quickly understood that some words were more 'just right' than others.

Adapted From:
www.readingrockets.org/;

Supporting Research:
Greenwood, S.C., & Flanigan, K. (2007);
Stahl, S.A., & Nagy, W.E. (2006);

Video:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTaYuYw8GNc&list=PLLxDwKxHx1yKs4Gkf1hLzdER_suMtzNTT#t=403

Word Specificity: Semantic Gradients Plus

This activity can assist students in determining the relationships between similar words in order to deepen their understanding of word meaning so that they increase word specificity in speaking and writing. This is one of a number of activities that help students understand semantic gradients so that they can use more precise words in speaking and writing.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	x
6–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	
After Reading	x

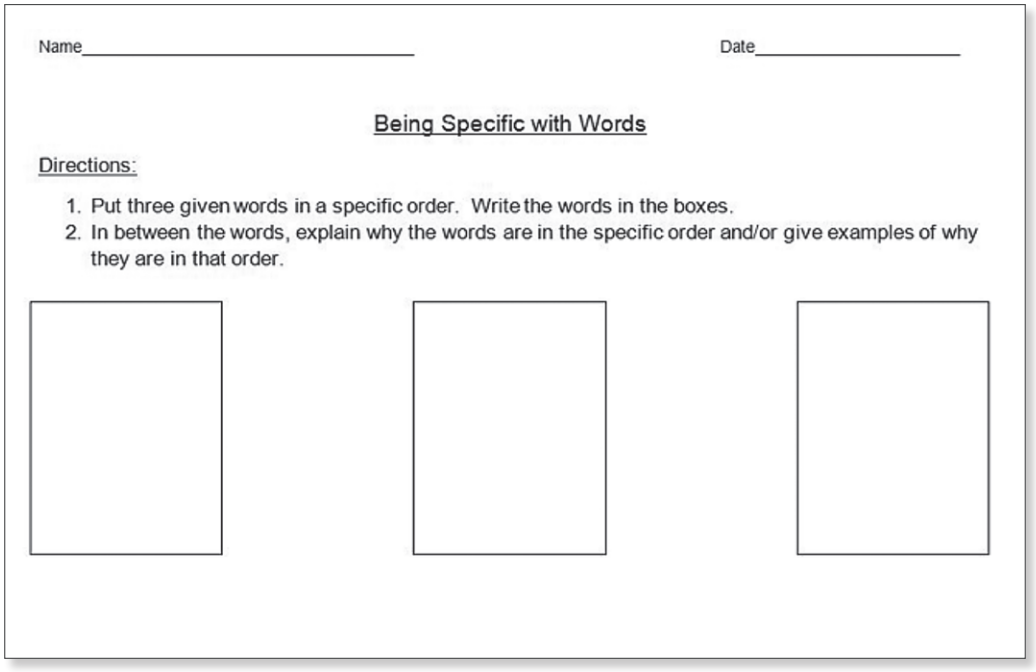
Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

1. Choose three words that are related, i.e., synonyms, which can be placed on a continuum and give them to the student on three separate sticky notes or index cards.
2. Have the student arrange the words into a specific order and then write the words into the three boxes on the graphic organizer.
3. Then, either in or in-between the boxes, have the student explain why the words were put into the specified order.
4. In addition, it may be helpful to have the student give an example of the word's connotation.

Examples:

BLANK GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



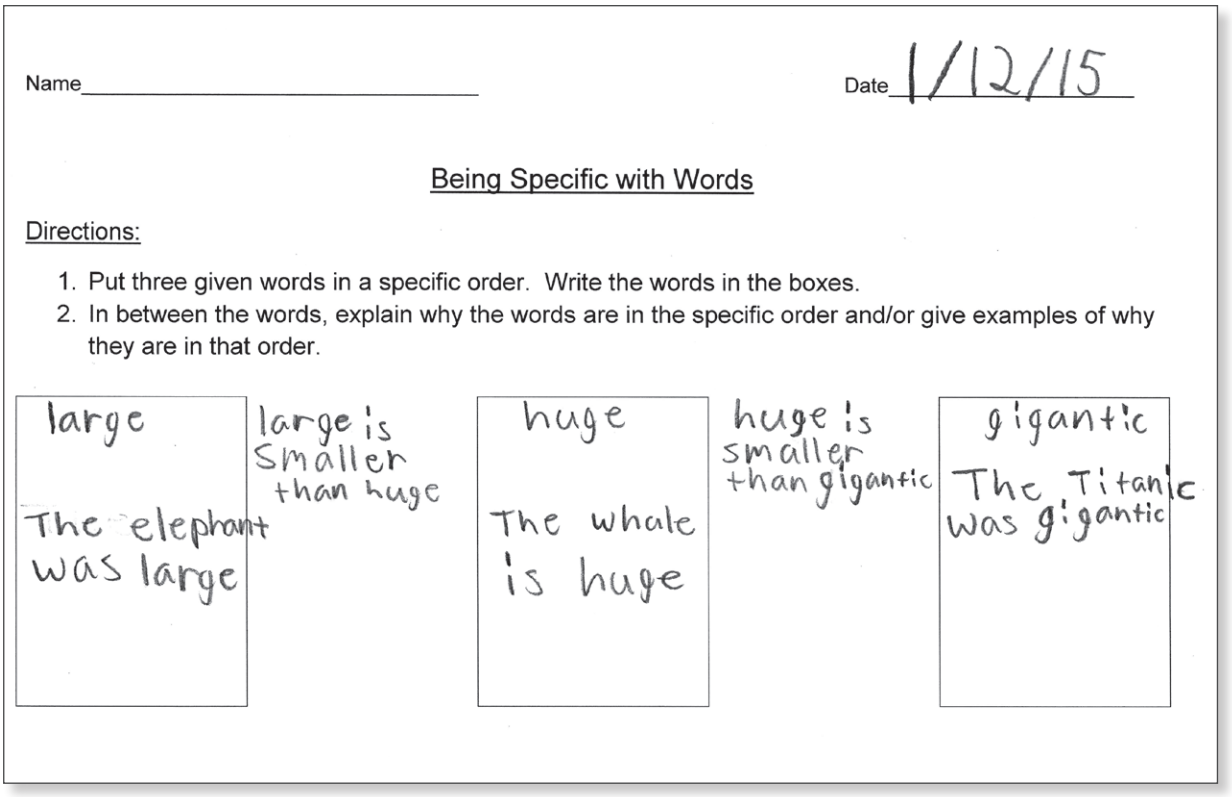
Name_____ Date_____

Being Specific with Words

Directions:

1. Put three given words in a specific order. Write the words in the boxes.
2. In between the words, explain why the words are in the specific order and/or give examples of why they are in that order.

Student Examples:



Name_____ Date 1/12/15

Being Specific with Words

Directions:

1. Put three given words in a specific order. Write the words in the boxes.
2. In between the words, explain why the words are in the specific order and/or give examples of why they are in that order.

large

The elephant was large

large is smaller than huge

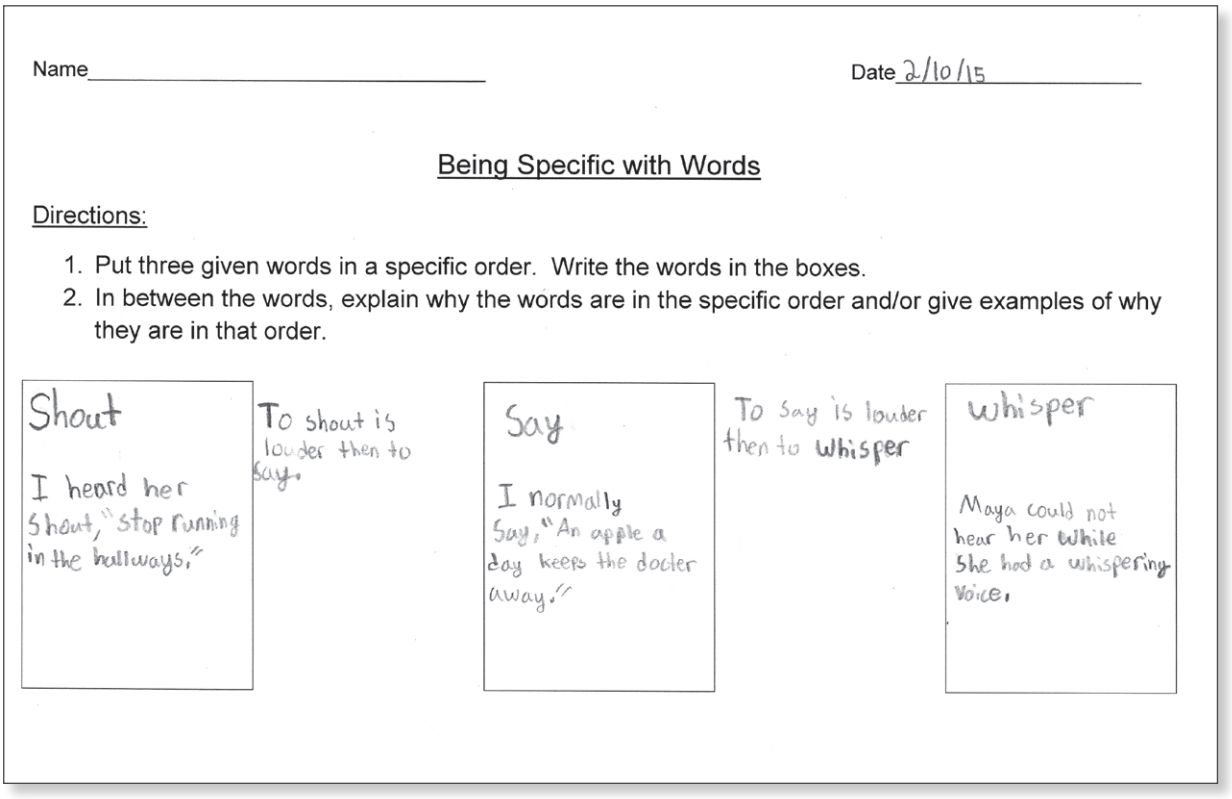
huge

The whale is huge

huge is smaller than gigantic

gigantic

The Titanic was gigantic



Name_____ Date 2/10/15

Being Specific with Words

Directions:

1. Put three given words in a specific order. Write the words in the boxes.
2. In between the words, explain why the words are in the specific order and/or give examples of why they are in that order.

Shout

I heard her shout, "Stop running in the hallways."

To shout is louder then to say.

Say

I normally say, "An apple a day keeps the docter away."

To say is louder then to whisper

whisper

Maya could not hear her while she had a whispering voice.

In both student examples above, the students needed to use the words in a sentence in order to then explain their relationship.

Adapted from:

Stahl, S.A., & Nagy, W.E. (2006), permission granted.

What's Your Sign?
Making Sophisticated Word Choices

This work was designed to immerse students in a word-rich environment. Objects and locations throughout the school are labeled with the common term, a more precise/sophisticated term, the Spanish word and the French word. This serves to support all students in the building. The ESL students, all of whom speak either Spanish or French, have access to native language terms, common English terms and more sophisticated words. Native language speakers of English have access to more sophisticated words as well as support for the foreign languages they are studying (as all students study either Spanish or French).

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	x
6–12	x

Before Reading
During Reading
After Reading

Assessment
Content Areas x

Procedure:

At Park Place Community Middle School, the ESL and foreign language teachers have labeled nearly everything in the classroom to support students with learning new words. The school built upon this highly effective strategy and took the work school-wide. The entire school is labeled with common terms, sophisticated terms, Spanish terms and/or French terms. For example, the hallways have 4" x 6" index cards that read, "hallway," "corridor," "el corredor," and "la couloir."

The initial objects and labels were chosen by the principal and staff. The second wave of labels were created after the principal and several staff members partnered with students and walked throughout the building to interview students about the terminology that they knew for various objects and locations in the school. By working directly with students, the staff got a much clearer picture of students' active and passive vocabularies. For example, they discovered that students knew the term "window ledge" but not "windowsill" or "pane of glass." Following this work of interviewing students, many additional labels were added in classrooms, offices and corridors.

In the initial stages of this work, the staff made a concerted effort to use the sophisticated terms in their conversations with students. For example, a student might be asked, "Why are you in the corridor?" or told, "Please line up near the egress." If these questions or statements were met with a puzzled look, the staff member simply pointed to the labels and gave the students a moment to make sense of it.

Examples:

Notes/Comments:

Principal Esperance coupled this school-wide labeling work with several professional learning sessions for teachers. Teachers met to brainstorm specific moments throughout the day to use the sophisticated terms labeled throughout the building.

Additionally, teachers worked to couple this labeling using sophisticated vocabulary with a concerted effort to weave elevated vocabulary beyond simply labeling by incorporating it into instruction, directions, and conversation with students. To build this habit, teachers shared written materials and lessons with one another and identified places where more precise/sophisticated terms could be used. Teachers used both context clues and definitions-on-the-run to clarify the meaning of the elevated vocabulary.

The school also instituted a school-wide routine in which students are encouraged to interrupt any time they hear a word that is unfamiliar and uncertain. Teachers quickly provide a synonym or definition and praise the student for his/her curiosity about words.

Source:

Thank you to Principal Glenda Esperance and the staff at Park Place Community Middle School in Brooklyn for sharing their innovative vocabulary work.

USING CONTEXT CLUES: A CRITICAL STRATEGY THAT WORKS WELL, EXCEPT WHEN IT DOES NOT

It's All in the Clues

Often, students are asked to use context clues, but teachers aren't specific about how to find those clues when reading. This lesson offers explicit instruction on how to locate context clues and use those clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
3–5	x
6–12	x

Before Reading
During Reading x
After Reading

Assessment
Content Areas x

Procedure:

The following steps might all be sequenced together in a single class period or divided into smaller chunks and taught over two or three days, depending on the needs of the students.

1. Pre-Assessment:

Ask students to complete the pre-assessment (included below). This will provide a baseline for what students already know about using context clues.

2. Explicit Instruction:

- Display a chart that explains each of the four common context clues.
- Teach a mini-lesson on how to apply each of these context clues. A model text, "The Peculiar Platypus," is included for demonstration. In this text, teachers might model how to apply the context clues using a think-aloud to demonstrate how an expert reader would use the clues to determine the meaning of the unfamiliar words. Immediately following the demonstration, teachers might ask students to work with a partner and try the same thinking with selected words.
  - Possible words to study in the demonstration:
    - Semiaquatic—definition clue
    - Tasmania—gist clue
    - Oviparous—antonym clue
    - Sports—puzzle clue (this is a known word, with an unfamiliar connotation)
  - Possible words for student practice:
    - Hind—synonym clue in the following sentence
    - Writhing—puzzle clue
    - Spurred—puzzle clue
    - Debilitating—gist clue

3. Further Study of Context Clues:

Following the mini-lesson, students are given an opportunity to read an article about context clues. This provides additional study of the clues before students are expected to independently apply the strategies.

- Ask students to independently read "Use the Clues" and annotate as they read.
- Ask students to talk with a partner and explain their understanding of each type of context clue.

4. Application of Context Clues:

Give students an opportunity to read a text and try the strategies. Teachers might choose to use some common texts so that students can meet and share the words they figured out using context clues. This might be done using 'book club' books or using a packet of texts and grouping students by choice of text. Following reading, ask students to identify the words that were unfamiliar, explain the meaning of the word, and name the context clue strategy that they used to determine the meaning. Teachers may repeat this work a few times to provide ample opportunities for practice.

5. Post-Assessment:

Administer the post-assessment (included below) and compare the pre- to the post-, looking for evidence of deeper understanding of context clues.

Examples:

A sample pre- and post-assessment, classroom chart, demonstration text, and article on context clues are included.

Notes/Comments:

The unique element to this instruction is the inclusion of an informational text about context clues. The "Use the Clues" article provides additional instructional support as well as providing a written explanation to accompany the verbal explanations given during the mini-lesson.

Caveat:

When asking students to independently read a text and practice using context clues, it is critically important that the text be at the student's independent reading level—96% to 99% accuracy. If students are given a text that is laden with unfamiliar words, there won't be enough familiar words to be able to practice using context clues. If students were to read a chapter of roughly 200 words per page and about 20 pages in a chapter, this would be about 4,000 words. At 96% accuracy, this chapter may have roughly 160 unfamiliar word usages, offering ample opportunity for practice. This is a critical point and explains the reason why encouraging the use of context clues may not help at all. The student must be able to read a sufficient amount of text in order for this important strategy to be of any use to the reader.

Pre-Assessment

Name _____

When we say, “use context clues to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words,” what specifically do you do as a reader? In other words, **how** do you use context clues?

Pre-Assessment

Name _____

When we say, “use context clues to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words,” what specifically do you do as a reader? In other words, **how** do you use context clues?

Sample Chart

Use the Clues!

Four common context clues:

Definition or Synonym Clues—look for definitions or synonyms that are right there in the text that give the meaning of unfamiliar words

Antonym Clues—look for words that seem to be the opposite of the unfamiliar word

Puzzle Clues—look at the whole sentence or paragraph to figure out a synonym that might fit in place of the unknown word, like finding a missing puzzle piece

Gist Clues—look at an unknown word in a list to get the gist of the unfamiliar word

Demonstration Text for the Mini-Lesson:

The Peculiar Platypus

The majority of mammals live exclusively on land. However, the platypus is semiaquatic, living both on land and in the water. But this is only one of the odd qualities of the platypus.

The habitat of the platypus is relatively small. It can be found only in eastern Australia and Tasmania. The body resembles that of an otter. Its tail looks roughly like a beaver's tail. But instead of a nose, the platypus sports a bill. The face looks more like Donald Duck than that of any mammal that most of us have seen.

But the oddities don't stop there. Nearly all mammals give birth to live young, but not the oviparous platypus. Female platypuses build nests and lay eggs like birds or reptiles do.

The strangest quality of the platypus can be found on the hind legs of the male. At the heel of both back feet, the male has a small spur, like a fang. The spur is connected to a cural gland which produces poisonous, toxic, debilitating venom. The venom isn't lethal for an attacker, but it immediately causes excruciating pain, leaving the attacker writhing as the platypus runs to safety. Though the attacker will likely survive being "spurred," the venom leaves permanent damage to the muscles and nerves.

Use the Clues

Courtesy of Cia Pinkerton

For some people, June 10, 2009 was a day to go swimming. For others it was a great day for a bike ride in the park. But for linguists (people who study language), June 10, 2009 was a day for celebrating. It was the day that the English language reached the 1,000,000 words mark! If you're curious, the one millionth word added to the English language was "Web 2.0." We add a new word to the English language about every 98 minutes, about 14.7 new words each day![1]

With so many new words being added to the language each year, it begs the question—How many words do we actually know? Well, that depends on how many words we interact with and how many times we interact with those words. Based on numerous studies, researchers have found that people who read voraciously know the meaning of about 50,000 to 75,000 words. People who read moderately know the meanings of about 50,000 words. And people who read infrequently know about 35,000 words.[2]

So how are these voracious readers learning all these new words? Really, it's quite simple. They learn the words from the texts that they read by using context clues. They use the meaning of the words that surround the unfamiliar word to figure it out. Because they are voracious readers, they see these new words frequently and the process of repetition moves the new learning from short-term memory to long-term memory.

If the word "voracious" was unfamiliar to you, you may now be starting to figure it out. It was used three times in the previous two paragraphs and there were clues to figure out its meaning.

There are many different ways to use context clues, but there are four ways that are most frequently used—1) Definition or Synonym clues, 2) Antonym clues, 3) Puzzle clues, and 4) Gist clues.

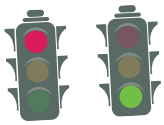
Definition or Synonym Clues

You may find that a definition of an unfamiliar word is right there in the text. It might be in a footnote or be written in the text following the unfamiliar word.

Another way you might see clues included right in the text is that you may see that the author has embedded a synonym, a word that means roughly the same thing, right into the text.

Have you already found two examples of context clues? The definition of synonym was right there in the sentence between the commas, "a word that means roughly the same thing." There are also synonym clues for "embedded." The sentence before it refers to words that are included. Included is a synonym for embedded.

Antonym Clues



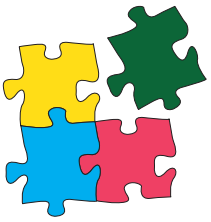
Paying attention to opposites can also help figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words. (Did you catch that "opposites" was your clue to the meaning of "antonym"?) Antonym clues are often signaled by words like: however, not, but, in contrast, on the other hand.

1 Sutter, J. (2009, June 10). English gets millionth word on Wednesday, site says. Retrieved April 16, 2014, from http://www.cnn.com/2009/TECH/06/10/million.words/index.html

2 Crystal, D. (2003). The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language (2nd ed.). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Take a look at this sentence, "Parker signaled a looey, not a right turn." Many Americans may not know the meaning of the word "looey." But we can figure it out. We know that Parker signaled that he was going to do something and that something was not a right turn. The logical opposite is a left turn. That's what a "looey" is—a left turn.

Puzzle Clues



When sentences have definition clues, synonym clues or antonym clues, it's pretty easy to figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word. However, these don't occur that often. Writers include these kinds of clues when they suspect a word is unfamiliar to the audience. But what about words that the author expects the reader to know, but are actually unfamiliar to a particular reader?

For these words we might use puzzle clues. This is the process of using the meaning of the whole sentence or paragraph to figure out what would logically make sense for the meaning of the unfamiliar word. It's like finding a missing piece of a puzzle. Someone might not know the word "canine," but could logically figure out its meaning in the sentence, "She taught her canine to sit up, beg, fetch, and roll over." To figure out the meaning of "canine" we look to the rest of the sentence and ask, "Who or what do people usually teach to sit up, beg, fetch, and roll over?" Though it's possible to be many things, the most logical answer is "dog." And that is indeed the meaning of "canine."

Gist Clues

Sometimes you may not be able to figure out the exact meaning of a word, but can at least get a general idea. This happens frequently when reading a list. For example, you might read, "She gave me a beautiful bouquet of roses, daisies, and hydrangeas." You may not know precisely what a "hydrangea" is, but from the context, or meaning, of the sentence you know that it something in a bouquet (usually flowers) and you know that roses and daisies are flowers, so you can figure out that "hydrangeas" must be some kind of flower.

Find the Meaning

It's all about using the clues! With nearly 15 words being added to the English language every day and a total of over 1,000,000 words, experienced readers expect to encounter new words in their reading. They pay attention and use their context clues to figure out the meaning. The next time you read, try a few of the context clue strategies. Soon you may be on your way to building the personal vocabulary of a voracious reader—50,000 to 75,000 words at your command!

Post-Assessment

Name _____

When we say, "use context clues to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words," what specifically do you do as a reader? In other words, **how** do you use context clues?

Post-Assessment

Name _____

When we say, "use context clues to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words," what specifically do you do as a reader? In other words, **how** do you use context clues?

Using Context to Determine the Meaning of Unknown Words

This activity can be done in two parts. First, teachers can provide students with a brief self-assessment tool that helps them learn about how to use context clues to determine the meanings of words they do not know:

USES	✔
Whole Class	
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	
3–5	
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	x

Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Template:

What does it mean to use context to figure out the meanings of words I don't know?	**What are some of the different ways I can use context to find meanings of words I don't know?**

Sample:

What does it mean to use context to figure out the meanings of words I don't know?	**What are some of the different ways I can use context to find meanings of words I don't know?**
Using context clues means to read around the word that I don't know and find hints about the meaning.	Some strategies I can use are: ■ Read the sentences before and after the sentence the word is used in. ■ Find the part of speech. ■ Cover the word I don't know and read the sentence without it and try to put my own word in there.

Secondly, once teachers have determined that the student knows one or two ways to use context to determine the meaning of unknown words, the teacher can provide students with a list of predictable unknown words from a reading. Then, students predict the meaning of the word before reading, and then they read the text, using context clues to define the unknown words from the list. The students can then list the "new" definition that they have developed based on the reading, and then compare the two.

While it is recommended that students practice this with a new text, teachers can scaffold this activity by having students work with a text they have read once.

Words	My definition before reading	My definition after reading	The context clues I used	How my two definitions compare to each other

Adapted from:
Allen, J. (2007)

When to Use the Dictionary and When Not to

The dictionary is a useful tool for students to use and its use should be taught explicitly. Note that there are times when its use is not advised. One of these would be when students are in the middle of a reading task. Interrupting reading to 'go look it up in the dictionary' is disruptive to the comprehension process and may result in becoming an obstacle in making sense of the text.

Dictionary Prerequisites

Learning alphabetical order (not just the first letter) for dictionary use requires that students understand that subsequent letters may need to be alphabetized when words start with the same letter as illustrated below:

Alphabetizing by 1st letter	Alphabetizing by 2nd letter	Alphabetizing by 3rd letter	Alphabetizing by 4th letter
Basic	Dab	Drab	Drift
Caustic	Dense	Dredge	Drink
Pliant	Distant	Drink	Drip
Sizable	Dome	Drop	
Trellis	Dusty	Druggist	

- Understanding syllabication and the ways that the dictionary syllabicates words.
- Understanding typical features and abbreviations found in dictionaries, including parts of speech.
- Understanding the pronunciation key and how it works.
- Discussing times when using a dictionary is a good idea and when it is not.
- Spending some time exploring morphology and the meaning and role of affixes and the meaning of root words.
- Studying 'word families' (and here we are not talking about rhyme families, but syntactic variations of a particular word), typically caused by a change in affix as in the example on the next page.

Word	Part of Speech	Meaning
Develop	verb	When something **develops**, it grows or changes over a period of time and usually becomes more advanced, complete, or severe.
Developing	adjective	If you talk about **developing** countries or the **developing** world, you mean the countries or the parts of the world that are poor and have few industries.
Developmental	adjective	**Developmental** means relating to the development of someone or something...the emotional, educational, and developmental needs of the child.
Redevelop	verb	When an area is **redeveloped**, existing buildings and roads are removed and new ones are built in their place.
Redevelopment	noun	When **redevelopment** takes place, the buildings in one area of a town are knocked down and new ones are built in their place.

Definitions taken from the Collins COBUILD Dictionary, permission granted.

- Use of a dictionary that provides student-friendly definitions, such as the Collins COBUILD Dictionary (www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english-cobuild-learners). Student-friendly definitions speak directly to the student (and often include the word 'you' in the definition) in accessible language. In particular, student-friendly definitions do not try to define the target word with other words the reader is unlikely to know.

The Definition Challenge

Purpose:

This activity allows students to engage with new vocabulary terms by using their knowledge of roots, affixes, and similar words to come up with original definitions for the words.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	
Discussion	

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

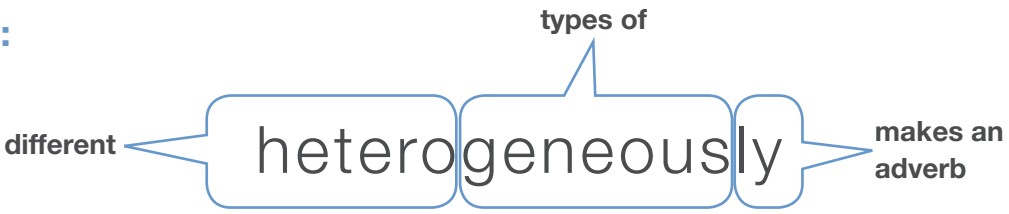
Before Reading
During Reading
After Reading

Assessment
Content Areas

Procedure:

Students are divided into several groups or teams. One team is given a dictionary. The teacher or student facilitator posts a word on the board. The teams are then given a set amount of time to try to formulate a definition of the word. Students should be prompted to look for roots and affixes that they know, and make connections to other words that look like the vocabulary word. The group with the dictionary must look up the word, and should revise the definition to ensure that the meaning is clear. When the time has ended, the groups will share their definitions, and then at last, compare it to the definition given by the dictionary group.

Example:



Possible definition: in a way that has different types of things

Actual definition (from www.m-w.com): in a manner consisting of diverse ingredients or constituents/people

Notes/Comments:

Teachers should consider grouping students heterogeneously to ensure a variety of levels within each group. The teacher should check the definition from the dictionary group before announcing it to the class, with accuracy and clarity. The dictionary group role should rotate among the teams so that each team has a chance to participate in the different roles.

Caveat:

Skilled students will defer to their knowledge of roots in order to create definitions for the words; therefore, teachers must be careful when selecting words to use for this activity.

Source:

Carleton, L. & Marzano, R.J. (2010)

I Have…, Who Has…? A Word Meaning Game

In this variation of "I Have, Who Has," students are asked to match terms that they are given ("I have…" cards) to different categories that are presented ("Who has…?" cards). The rules of this game allow for great flexibility in how categories and examples are generated, and can be used across content areas and grade levels. When teacher-led, this can be used as a quick check for understanding during a lesson.

USES	✔
Whole Class	
Small Group	x
Independent	
Discussion	

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	
During Reading	
After Reading	

Assessment	
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

This game can be played in flexible groups or as a teacher-led activity. This game has many variations. Two distinct versions:

VERSION 1: (ONE CARD)

In this version of the game, all students receive a stack of cards containing the phrases "I have…, Who has…?" Teachers place a vocabulary word in the "I have…" row, and a definition for a different vocabulary word in the "Who has…?" row. Students would then work with their groups to match their "I have" words to their peers' "Who has?" definitions.

VERSION 2: (TWO CARDS)

In this version, which can be used as a check for understanding within a lesson, there are two sets of cards: a set of "I have…" cards, and a set of "Who has…" cards. The vocabulary terms are still placed on the "I have" cards, and the definitions are placed on the "Who has…?" cards. The teacher holds all of the "Who has…?" cards, and shows them to the class one by one, asking students to show the correct "I have…" vocabulary card for the corresponding definition. Teachers can conduct a quick check for understanding by seeing which students held up correct cards.

Examples:

VERSION 1

Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
I have…Synthesize (v.) **Who has**…happening afterwards?	**I have**…Subsequent (adj.) **Who has**…include or add into another part?	**I have**…incorporate (v.) **Who has**…determine the worth or validity of something?

VERSION 2

Teacher Card (teacher holds up)	Student's Response Card
Who has…happening afterwards?	**I have**…Subsequent (adj.)

Notes/Comments:

This game can also be used to practice identification of grammatical terms and parts of speech.

Caveat:

If students are working in groups, teachers need to ensure that each group member participates so all students take turns finding matches for their cards.

Adapted From:
Hollas, B. (2007)

Word Wizard

As seen earlier in this practice guide, there are numerous ways to foster a child's word consciousness. This activity, from *Bringing Words to Life* by Isabel L. Beck, Margaret G. McKeown, and Linda Kucan, encourages students to track how their vocabulary words are used outside of the classroom, in real-world applications. This allows students to not only see the words used in different contexts, but how they are used in ways that are directly relevant to them, making the words more meaningful.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	x
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading
During Reading
After Reading

Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

In Word Wizard, students earn points by bringing in examples of how specific vocabulary words are used outside of the classroom. They can hear, see, or use the words to get points. The student must present their findings to the class, and once the teacher has approved the "evidence," the student's points get placed on a chart. Students can receive teacher-created awards for the points that they earn.

Examples:

Vocabulary Words: collect, utensil, settle.

Student Evidence: At 8:00, my mother told me to **collect** my writing **utensils**, and put them away. She said it was time for me to get **settled** and get ready for bed.

Student Evidence: Yesterday, I was in a restaurant and there was a thing on the counter that said "**utensils**." That's where all of the knives, forks, and spoons were.

Notes/Comments:

In their study of this activity, Beck, McKeown, and Kuncan found that some students fabricated their evidence of how the words were used outside of the classroom. The researchers concluded that even these fabrications accomplished the purpose of the activity, which was to have students properly identify how the words were used in context. Therefore, they chose not to question the fabrication, and still awarded students their points if the words were used properly.

Caveat:

Word Wizard can become very competitive and time-consuming. Therefore, it is crucial to work with students to set clear rules beforehand, including what is acceptable evidence, and when the presentations of evidence will occur.

Sample Word Wizard Tracking Chart

Adapted from:
Beck, I., McKeown, M.G. & Kucan, L. (2013)

Explicit Instruction of Academic Vocabulary

There are many occasions, particularly with abstract or conceptual words, where explicit instruction is required. One of these is when teaching academic vocabulary, where meanings of these Tier 2 words are complex, nuanced, and often not fully understood by students. Teachers should carefully select which academic vocabulary to teach, and provide explicit instruction with ample time for practice. Teaching academic vocabulary in a direct instruction format has been supported by research. Anita Archer, among others, has developed a protocol in which direct instruction is used to teach the meanings of sets of four Tier 2 academic words that are relevant to the lesson and/or unit. Dr. Archer uses choral response frequently as a tool to engage students and that format is reflected in this protocol.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	
3–5	
6–8	x
9–12	x

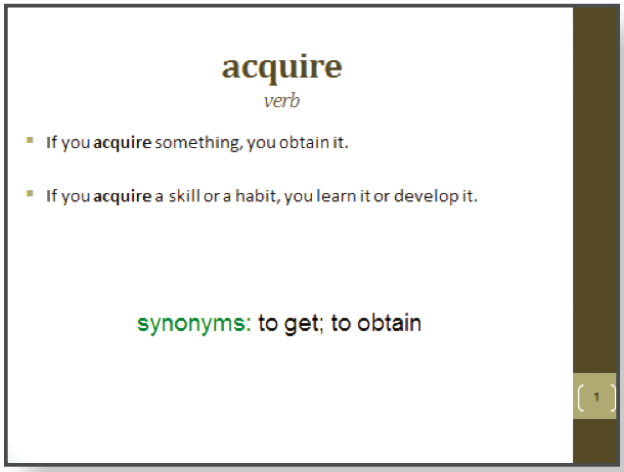
Before Reading	x
During Reading	
After Reading	

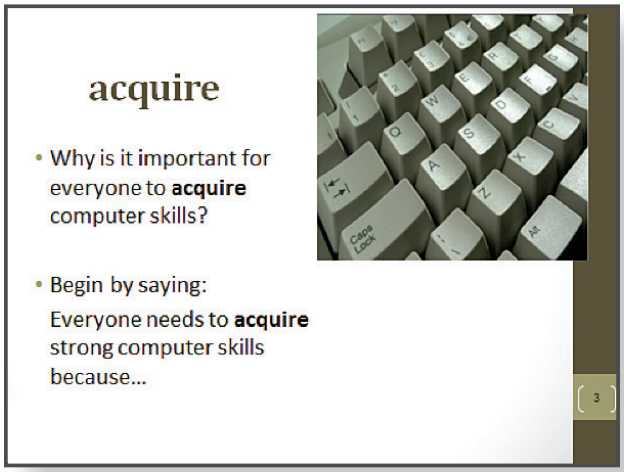
Assessment	
Content Areas	x

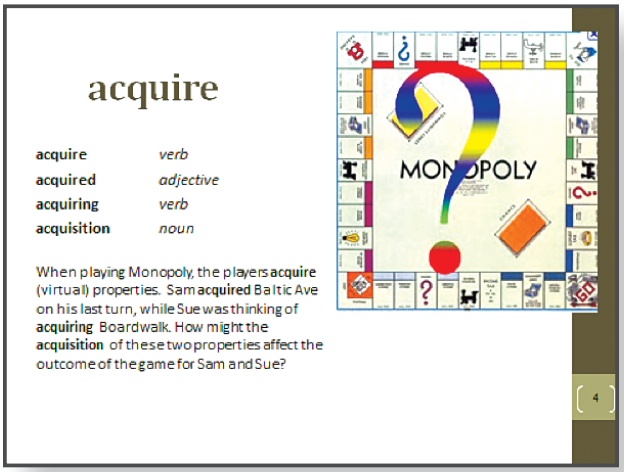
Procedure:

1. **Introduce the word.** The teacher says the word aloud and then repeats it with the class. The teacher then gives the part of speech and then repeats it with the students. The teacher then says the synonym and repeats with the students.
2. **Provide a student-friendly explanation.** The teacher provides a student-friendly definition of the word and provides an example of the word in context. The students are given a sentence starter to use with a partner. The students (partner one and partner two) both have a chance to share their understanding of the word by creating unique sentences using the sentence starter. *During this segment of the lesson, the teacher is circulating and checking for student understanding. Students then share with the whole group.*
3. **Illustrate the word's meaning with examples.** The students are provided with another illustrated example and sentence starter. They then follow the same procedure outlined in step number two to create and share new sentences using that word.
4. **Check for understanding.** The students are introduced to the "family" members (other words in the syntactic word family) and the teacher repeats the method outlined in step one. The class then does a choral reading or a choral reading of the paragraph that incorporates all of the words in the word family. For the choral reading, the teacher leaves out selected words in the paragraph and the students fill those in as they are all reading chorally.

Example of the protocol illustrating instruction of one of the four new words:







Notes/Comments:

This procedure for teaching new Tier 2 vocabulary should be done with as much student practice as possible. Whenever there is an opportunity to read, the students should read, either with the teacher and the class chorally, or with a partner. Conducting a popcorn or round-robin reading or calling on individual students to read aloud on their own is not advised.

Caveat:

Teachers must prepare these lessons ahead of time. This procedure for teaching new vocabulary works best as a slideshow or PowerPoint presentation.

Source:

Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient Teaching by Anita L. Archer and Charles A. Hughes. Copyright 2011 The Guilford Press

Thinking Maps® Circle and Brace Maps for Vocabulary Learning

Thinking Maps® is a language of eight visual patterns each based on a fundamental thought process. These patterns are used individually and in combination across every grade level and curriculum area as an integrated set of tools for life-long learning. Each Thinking Map is designed to answer guiding questions that are related to a specific thought process. Teaching everyone in your learning community to "ask and answer questions" (one of the elements of the Common Core Standards) is critical to mastering the cognitive demands of the Common Core and State Standards.

Below find two of the eight Thinking Maps® along with guidance on how to apply them in instruction.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x
Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	x
Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	x
Pre-K–2	x
3–5	x
6–12	x
6–8, 9–12 all content areas	

Thinking Maps® Circle Map for Vocabulary Learning

Using the Circle Map for Vocabulary develops deep ***understanding of academic vocabulary terms*** through the use of multiple strategies for defining a word. The circle map also serves to develop a bank of ***word learning strategies*** that will help students when they encounter any unknown vocabulary.

Procedure:

The Circle Map for Vocabulary Learning process begins with identifying a vocabulary word and working to define that word using 3-6 word learning strategies. First, write the term in the middle of the paper and draw a small circle around it. Then, draw a large circle around that—this is for all the "definitions." Almost at the edge of the paper, draw a large box—the Frame of Reference.

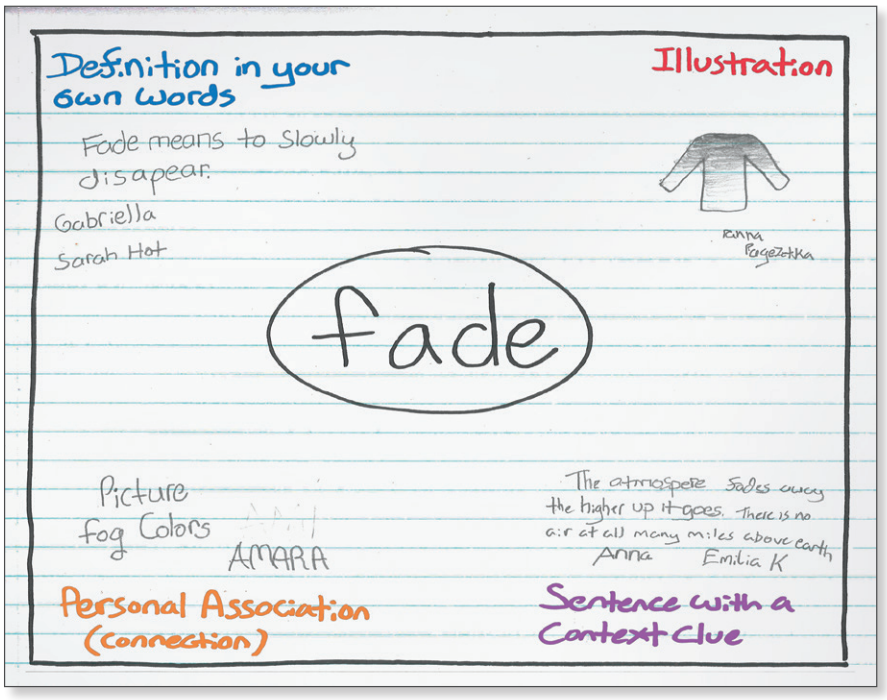
In the upper right-hand corner of the Frame, write the word "picture" or "illustration"—one of the most powerful strategies to learn and remember a new word. Then, inside the large circle, near the upper right-hand corner, add an illustration that represents the vocabulary word. (Note: Teachers may need to come back to this illustration after determining the meaning of the word.)

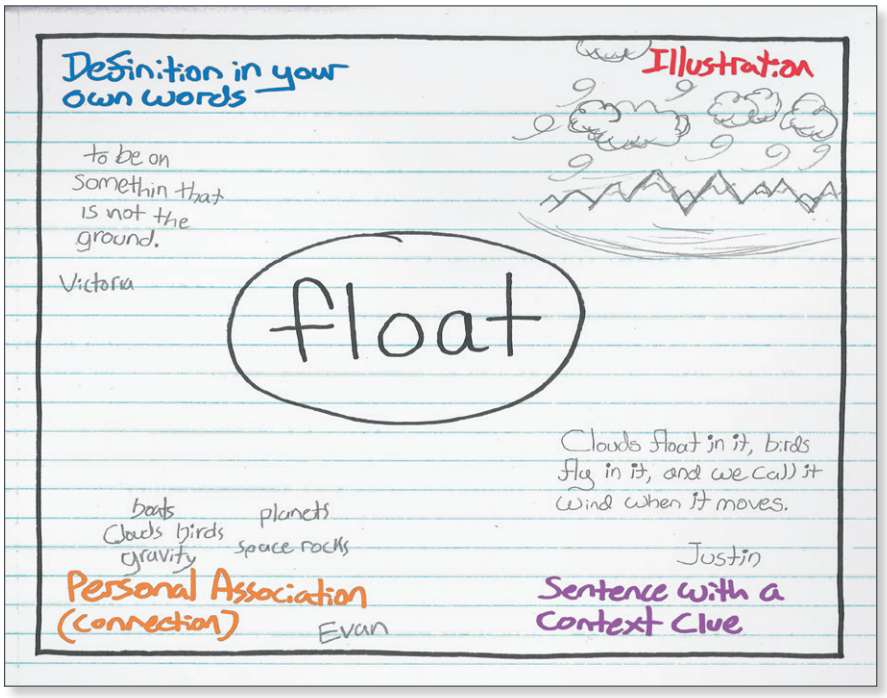
Moving around the circle from the right side to the left, in the Frame, add 2-4 additional word learning strategies. Near each strategy, but inside the circle, add the definition that matches that strategy. Additional word learning strategies include, but are not limited to: prefixes, affixes, suffixes, roots, related words, sentence with word in context, examples, non-examples, cognates, derivations, etc.

Finally, in the upper left-hand corner of the Frame, write "definition in my own words." Then, inside the large circle, near the upper left-hand corner, add your own definition.

Be sure to note each strategy in the Frame to ensure that students are learning both the new vocabulary term as well as the word learning strategy.

Examples:





Notes/Comments:

The Circle Map for Vocabulary Learning is one example of the 8 Thinking Maps© used across all grades and all content areas.

Special Considerations:

Although use of the Circle Map affects vocabulary learning, the impact on student achievement is based on whole school implementation. See www.thinkingmaps.com

Acknowledgement:
P.S./I.S. 113, Principal Alejandro Megias.

Thinking Maps®: Brace Map for Vocabulary Learning

Using the Brace Map for Vocabulary Learning develops ***deep understanding of an academic*** term through the analysis of the word's parts (prefix, suffix, root) and the meaning made when they are put together. It also develops an understanding of word parts that will help students generalize this knowledge when they encounter other unknown vocabulary that include one or more of those word parts.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	x
3–5	
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	x

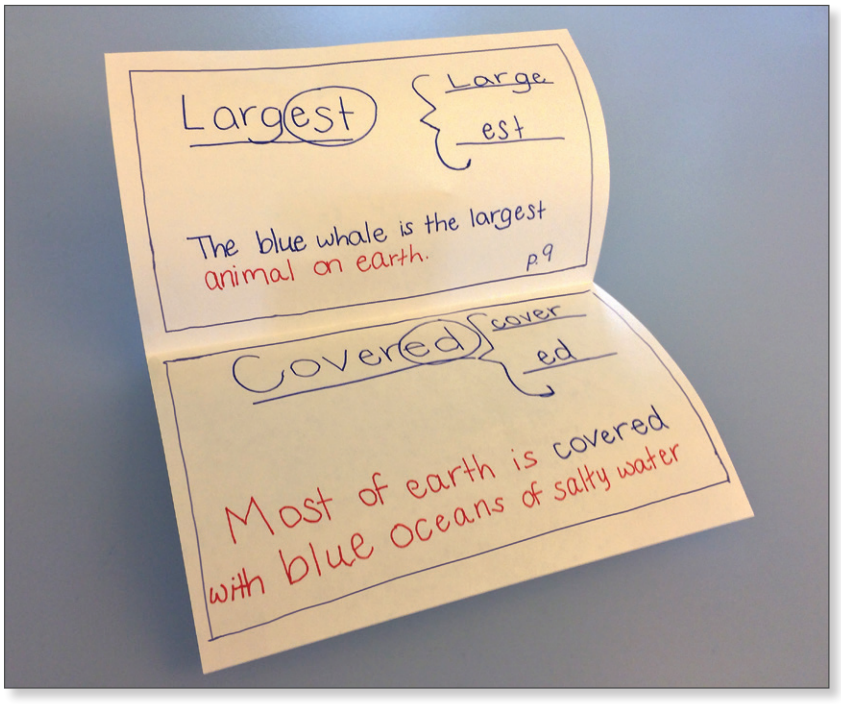
Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

The Brace Map for Vocabulary Learning process begins with the identification of a vocabulary word that has meaningful "word parts" and then breaking that word down before defining it using the parts. There are three steps:

1. Write the word on the left side of the paper. Underline it and draw a bracket to the right.
2. Write each of the word parts on the other side of the bracket. Underline each part.
3. Draw a large box around the edge of the paper—the Frame of Reference. In the Frame, write a sentence containing the word or summary statement of the meaning of the word using the word parts. A visual image can also be added to the Frame to further enhance the definition.

Example:



Acknowledgement:
P.S./I.S. 113, Principal Alejandro Megias.

Notes/Comments:

Note that this strategy only works when the word actually has parts that can be put together to make meaning (for example, that strategy will not work for the word "quadrant" as "quad" + "rant" does not mean "throwing a temper tantrum four times").

Special Considerations:

The Brace Map for Vocabulary Learning is one example of the 8 Thinking Maps© used across all grades and all content areas.

Source:

Thinking Maps®: A Language for Learning by David Hyerle & Chris Yeager, www.thinkingmaps.com

Acknowledgement:

P.S./I.S. 113, Principal Alejandro Megias.

Looking for Morphology

Morphology provides students with a means by which they can determine the meaning of unfamiliar words by focusing on prefixes, suffixes, and root words to find familiar patterns in unfamiliar words.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	x
2–5	x
6–12	x
all content areas	

Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	x

Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

1. Teach students how to use word parts to ascertain a word's meaning by having them look for and identify the root word and determine whether they know its meaning. Use word parts to make a prediction about a word's meaning and then use context to confirm that prediction.

2. The teacher introduces a target word from the current text students are working on. In the example of "reactive," students look for a root word and then break the word into three parts by drawing lines: re/act/ive. Teacher illustrates that after removing the prefix and suffix, the root word (act) remains. Teacher defines the Latin root, (act = to do). Students define the prefix (re) and the suffix (ive). Then define words react, active, then reactive. Use the words in sentences when defining each word. Apply the same procedure to other meanings of act. Teach the semantic structure of the word (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb). Students record the morphological forms according to their parts of speech and function in sentences on their charts. Students use these charts as personal references when they read and write.

Example:

Verbs (Action)	Nouns (Person, Place, Thing or Idea)	Adjectives (Words to Describe Nouns)	Adverbs (Words to Describe Actions)
determine	determination	determined	determinable
investigate	Investigation, investigator	investigative	
act	action	active, reactive, inactive	actively

Special Considerations:

Students will need explicit instruction on how to break words apart in order to determine root words and affixes, including explicit instruction in syllabication.

Supporting Research:

Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/adlit_pg_082608.pdf

Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School Practice Guides http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/english_learners_pg_040114.pdf

Morphology and Word Parts

Teaching students about root words and affixes through direct instruction provides ways to expand vocabulary by learning about morphological parts of the word that can then be applied to new words. It shows students how to view words as a combination of parts and helps them break down complex, unfamiliar words to determine their meaning.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	
3–8	
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	
After Reading	

Assessment	
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

This strategy teaches students to view words as a combination of parts, morphemes, and as root words and affixes.

1. Select targeted words to teach that have regular roots and suffixes.
2. Choose words that are important for text comprehension.
3. Choose functionally important words that students will encounter often.
4. Use both context and definitions to teach words.
5. Encourage "deep" processing of word meanings.
6. Provide multiple exposures.

Examples:

Strategy	Examples that encourage deep processing
Find a synonym or antonym	■ Which word goes with ***fabulous***—o.k. or super? ■ Why does super go with ***fabulous***? ■ Is it ***fabulous*** if you fall and scrape your knee?
Make up a novel sentence with a word	■ Maria thought her car was ***fabulous*** because...
Classify the word with other words	■ Is a masterpiece ***fabulous***? Why? ■ The concert was the best he had ever heard. Every note seemed perfect. Am I talking about ***fabulous*** or discover?
Relate the definition to one's own experiences	■ The family had a ***fabulous*** time at the park. ■ How could a family have a ***fabulous*** time? ■ When have you had a ***fabulous*** time?

Supporting Research:

Berninger, Naguy, et al., 2003

www.readingrockets.org

The Center on Teaching and Learning at The University of Oregon - uoregon.edu

Using Word Parts: Prefixes and Suffixes

Use prefixes and suffixes to brainstorm known words and to create new words in order to expand a student's vocabulary knowledge and ability to analyze meaningful parts of unknown words.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	x
6–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	x

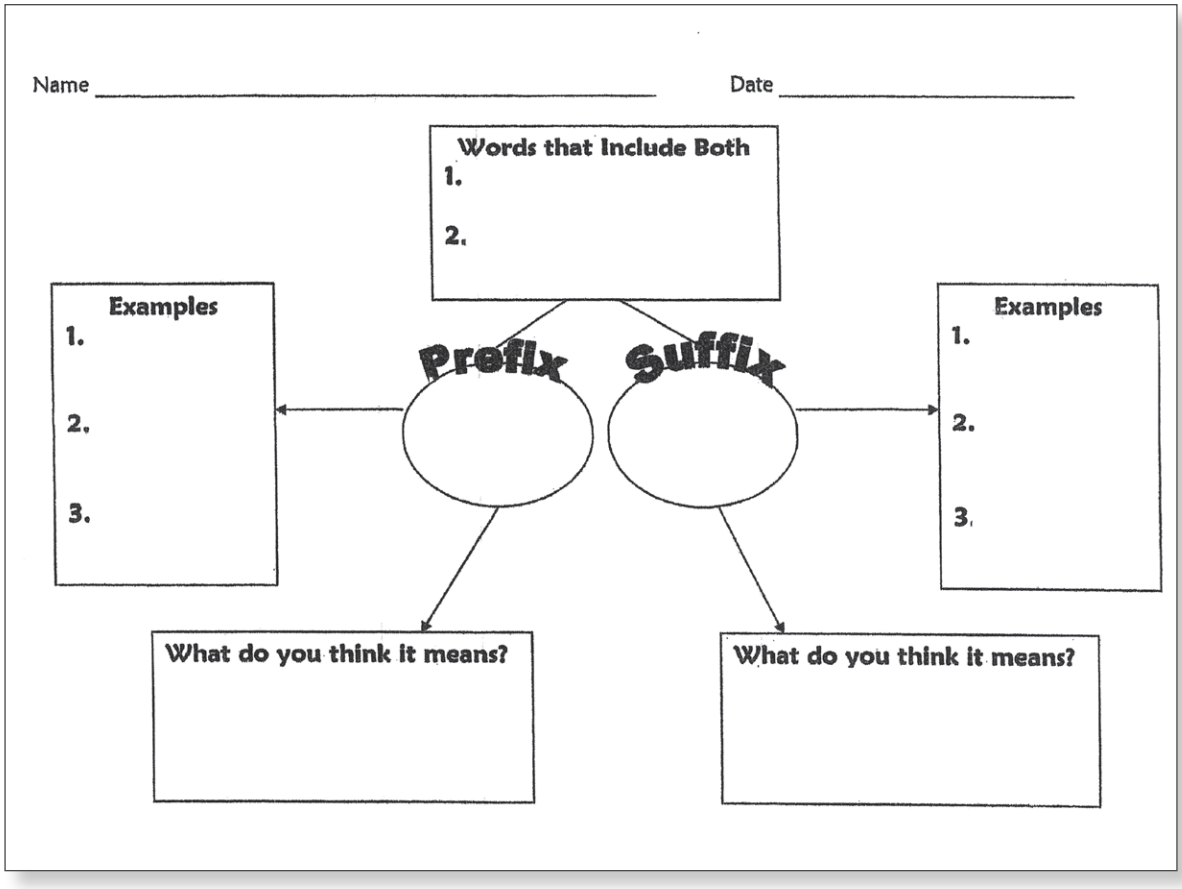
Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

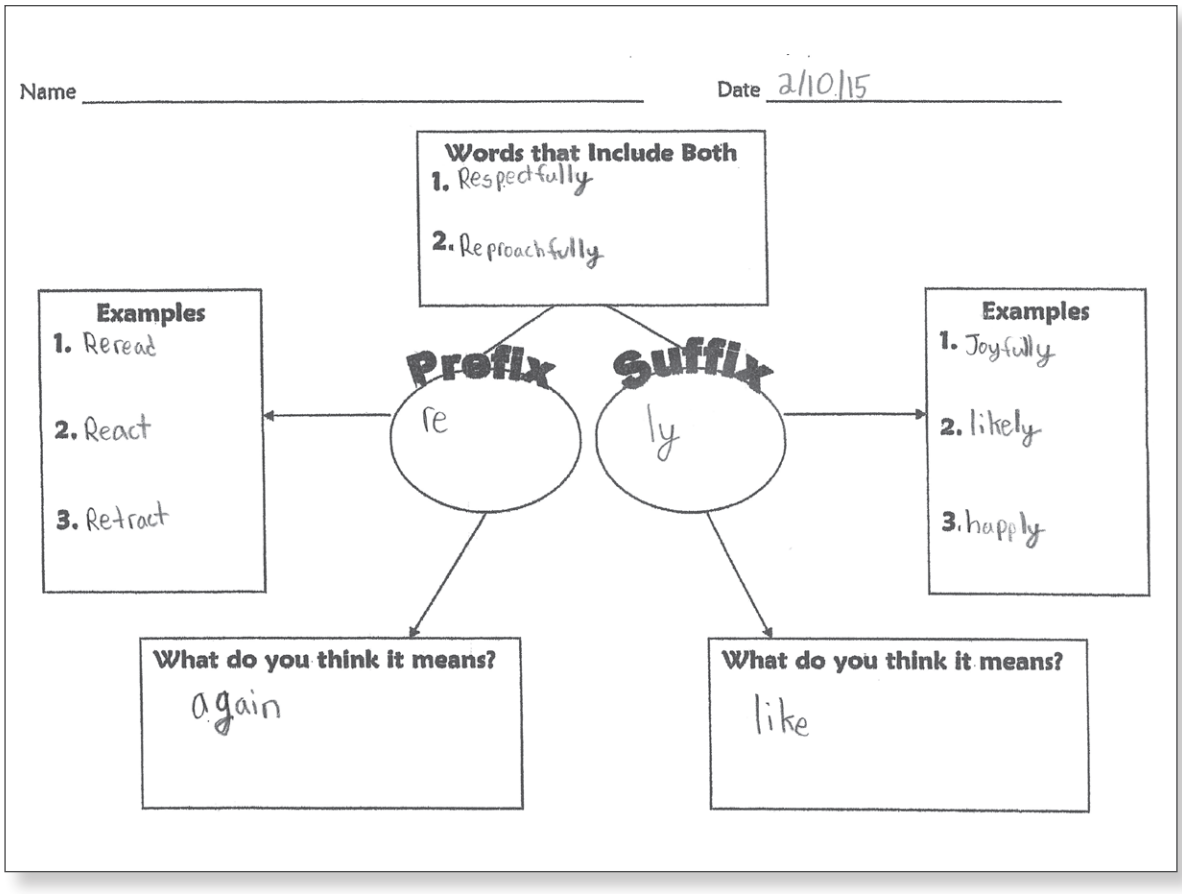
1. Choose a prefix and suffix for the students to explore with the graphic organizer. It is important to choose prefixes and suffixes that work well together. A helpful tip is to create possible student responses or a teacher answer sheet for each pairing of prefixes and suffixes to ensure that the students will be able to find words for all the categories.
2. Have students work in pairs or small groups to create words for each of the example boxes and then create words that include both affixes.
3. It is often useful to have students create words based on known word parts before having them use outside resources, like web searching, to fill in the missing information. This will encourage greater generalization of the information.

Example:

BLANK GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



STUDENT EXAMPLE



Supporting Research:
Bowers, P.N., Kirby, J.R., & Deacon, S.H. (2010)

Morphology Gone Wild: Creating Unusual Words

This activity provides an opportunity for students to become familiar with morphological concepts and word parts, focusing particularly on roots and affixes. This activity works particularly well with regular Latin and Greek roots with which students have some general background knowledge.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	
3–5	
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	

Assessment	x
Content Areas	

Procedure:

1. Students are given a list of common roots and affixes.
2. The teacher asks students to select a few roots with which they are familiar. Students then identify one or two "real" words that contain that root.

   (Challenge opportunity: Students can be asked to define those words, and connect the definition to the meaning of the root.)
3. Students repeat the process with a few prefixes and suffixes.
4. After sharing their work with the whole class, students create their own nonsense words by combining prefixes, roots, and suffixes. They should provide a definition and the appropriate part of speech. Students can work independently or in pairs.
5. Finally, students share their words with one another and try to guess the definitions.

Example:

Prefix	Root	Suffix	Word	Part of Speech and Definition
hyper	dict	ious	hyperdictious	(adj) the quality of talking excessively
	pseudo + graph+ log	ist	Pseudographologist	(n) one who studies fake writing

Notes/Comments:

Teachers can easily create scaffolds to support the diverse needs of the learners in their classroom, including: selecting targeted roots and affixes to study, limiting the number of roots and affixes that are shared, providing students with models of nonsense words, providing a "formula" for how to build the words (for example, 1 prefix + 1 root + 1 suffix = YOUR WEIRD WORD!), and providing guidance on how suffixes can affect parts of speech.

Using Word Parts to Determine Meaning and Explore New Words

Use word parts (i.e., prefixes, suffixes, roots) to determine the meaning of unknown words with the goal of generalizing this skill to other known and unknown words.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x
Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	x
Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	x
6–12	x

Procedure:

1. Choose a word that has two meaningful parts that can be analyzed to determine the meaning of the whole word. Some examples include: biology (see example), tricycle, dismal, employment, freedom, disobey, lovely, replied.
2. Student writes the word in the top box.
3. Either with peer or teacher support, segment the word into the two meaningful parts and write each word part with its meaning in the next two boxes.
4. Then, have the student use the meanings of the two word parts to derive the meaning of the original word.
5. Lastly, the student can use the word parts to explore words that are derivations of the original word (for example, biology and biological) or other words that contain the word parts.

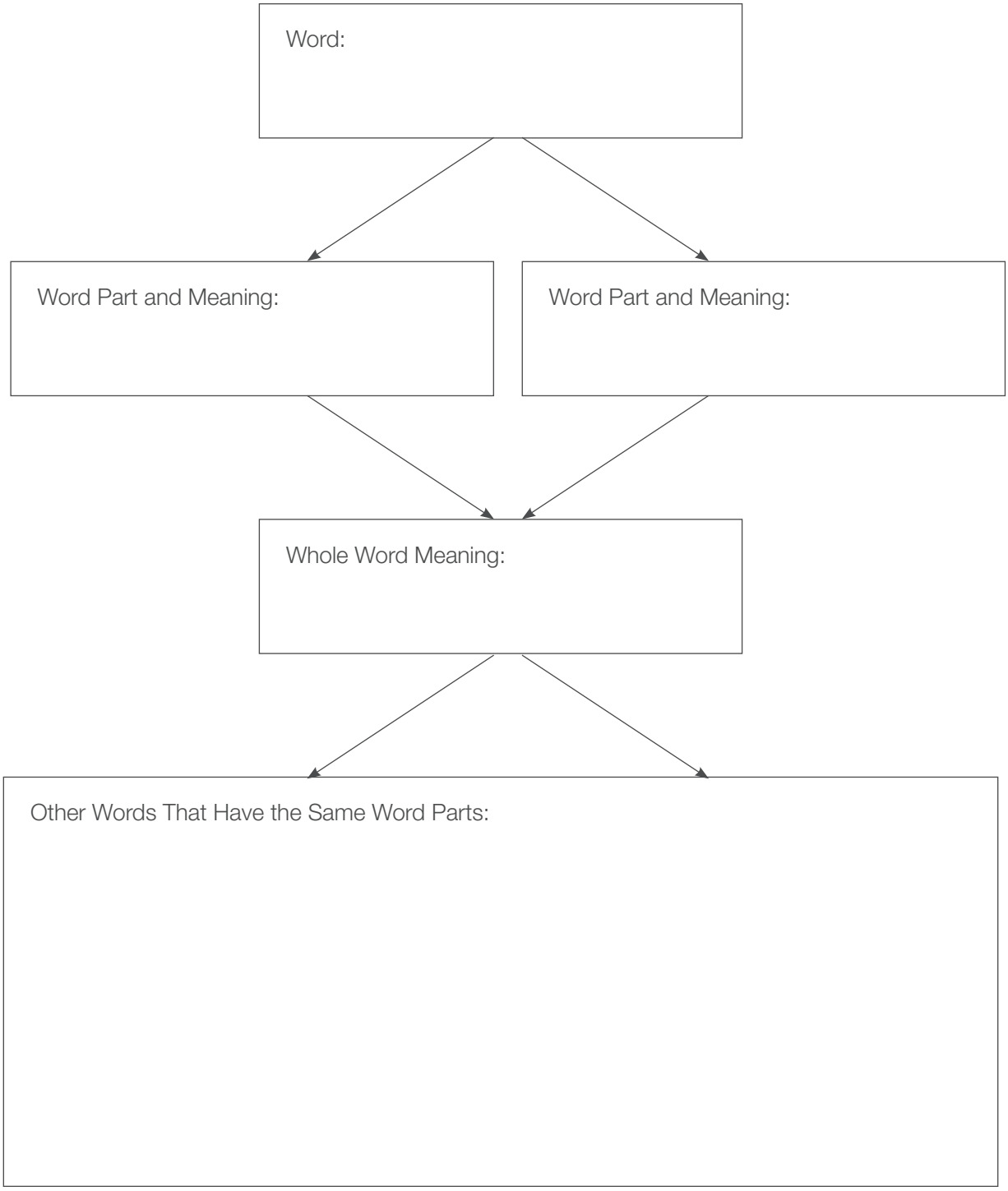
Examples:

BLANK GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

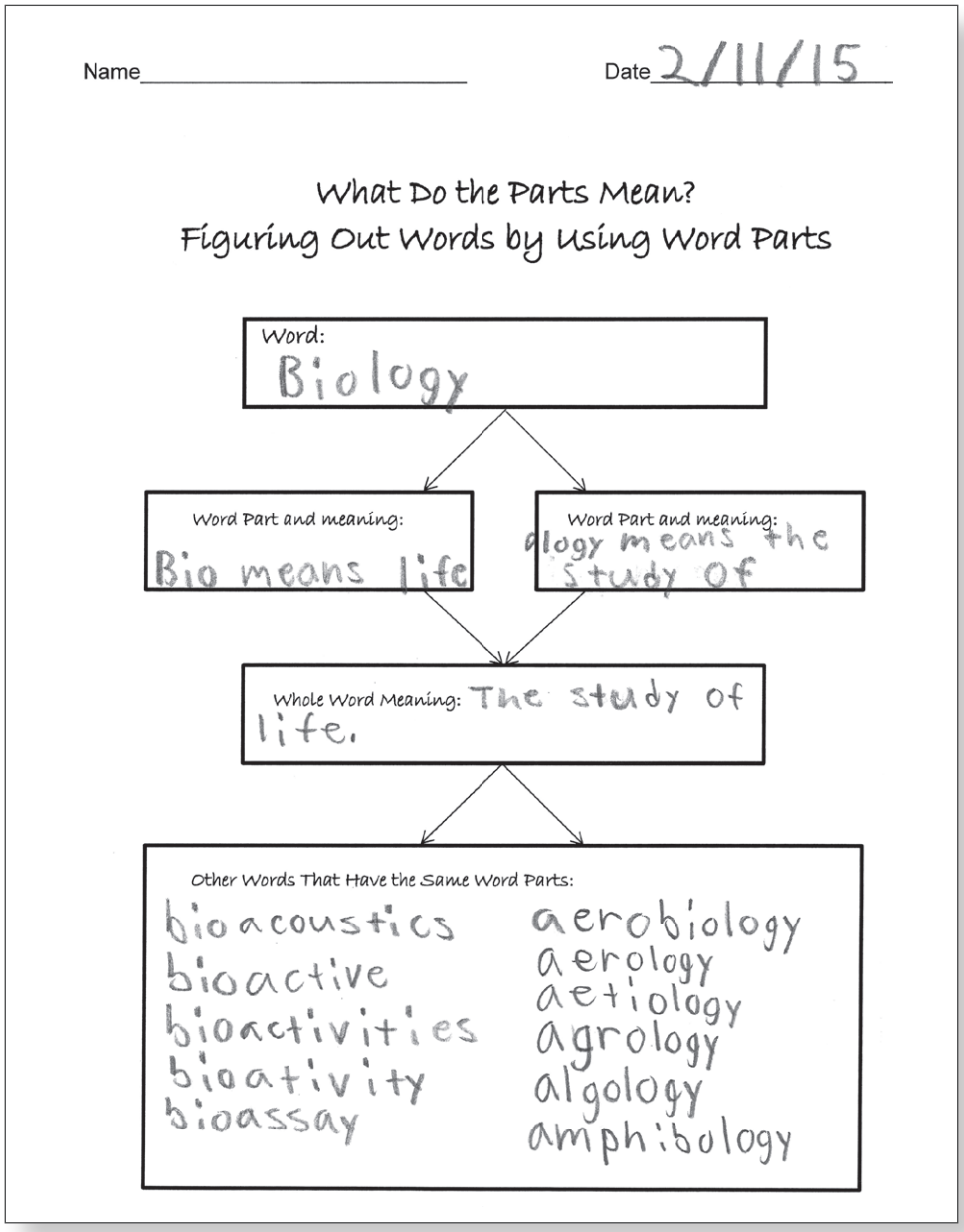
Name _____ Date _____

What Do the Parts Mean?

Figuring Out Words by Using Word Parts



Student Example:



Name_____ Date 2/11/15

What Do the Parts Mean?
Figuring Out Words by Using Word Parts

Word: Biology

Word Part and meaning: Bio means life

Word Part and meaning: ology means the study of

Whole Word Meaning: The study of life.

Other Words That Have the Same Word Parts:

bioacoustics
bioactive
bioactivities
bioativity
bioassay

aerobiology
aerology
aetiology
agrology
algology
amphibology

Source:
Bowers, P. N., Kirby, J. R., & Deacon, S. H. (2010)

Self-Assessment of Word Knowledge

Teaching students to assess their own word knowledge is one way to help them become independent vocabulary learners. Student self-assessment is key to helping students become reflective about their own learning and become aware of important words they need to learn.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x
Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	x
Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	x
6–12	x

Procedure:

Develop a self-assessment checklist with students such as the one featured below. Help students select and focus on a few words in their reading. When students self-assess their word knowledge, they can also set learning goals for themselves. Selecting their own words and determining which ideas to focus on is empowering. The students set personal goals by picking words they want to learn or recognize that they need to learn to help them better comprehend their reading. Students then define the terms in their own words and draw pictures to help them remember the word. Students also note on the self-assessment chart if they have a question about a word to discuss with the class.

Example:

Text: *Meadowlands*				**Author: Thomas F. Yereski**	
Page #	**Word**	**I Know it (!) I Want/Need to Know it (?)**	**My Definition**	**My Illustration**	**My Question(s)**
2	estuary	?	Not sure, something to do with water, river mouth		Is this a science word?
15	abundance	!	a lot, plenty		

Personal Word Learning

Personal word learning allows students to self-direct vocabulary learning by choosing difficult words and using multiple processes to help them determine the word meaning.

USES	✔
Whole Class	
Small Group	
Independent	x
Discussion	

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	
6–12	x

Before Reading	
During Reading	x
After Reading	

Assessment	
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

1. Have the students read a piece of text, either teacher or student selected.
2. As the text is read, students identify unknown words and record them on the graphic organizer below. They should note the page number. This is an individual list, so it will vary student by student.
3. The students then use a variety of methods to predict the meaning of the words. They may do this through one of the following supports:
   - Context clues (synonyms, antonyms, definitions, example, inference)
   - Analyze the word parts for clues to understanding the meaning
   - Ask a family member, peer, or school staff
   - Use a reference resource, such as: www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english-cobuild-learners
4. As the student determines a possible meaning, they should write it in the middle column of the graphic organizer. They should then check the meaning within the text.
5. If the meaning they found does not make sense, the student should mark an "R" next to that meaning and use the strategies above to come up with another meaning. This process should be repeated until they find a meaning that makes sense in the context of their reading.
6. Finally, they should write the correct meaning in the last column. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to share their meanings with the teacher or with their peers. Students can determine if any of their peers identified the same words and should, in that case, compare definitions.

Example:

Name _____ Date _____

Text Title: _____

Personal Vocabulary Recording Sheet

Directions:

1. Read the text selection.
2. Record words that are unknown or confusing, along with the page number.
3. Predict the word meaning through one of the following supports:
   - Context clues (synonyms, antonyms, definitions, example, inference)
   - Ask a family member, peer, or school staff
   - Use a reference, such as: www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english-cobuild-learners
4. Check your word meaning predictions in the text and try again if needed or accept
5. Write the correct meaning in the last column

Word & Page #	Predicted Meaning(s)	Check & Accept (A) or Retry (R)	Accepted Meaning

Notes/Comments:

Most students should be able to come up with acceptable meanings after the first or second prediction. While it is important for students to experience productive struggle, they should be instructed to check in with the teacher or other adult if they are having difficulty after the first few predictions.

These sheets could be kept in a personal binder or folder for future reference.

Supporting Research:

Baumann, J.F., Ware, D., & Edwards, E.C. (2007)

Visualizing Words: Can You Picture It?

Teaching students strategies for visualizing vocabulary words has been shown to increase understanding and retention.

USES	✔
Whole Class	
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	
Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	
Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

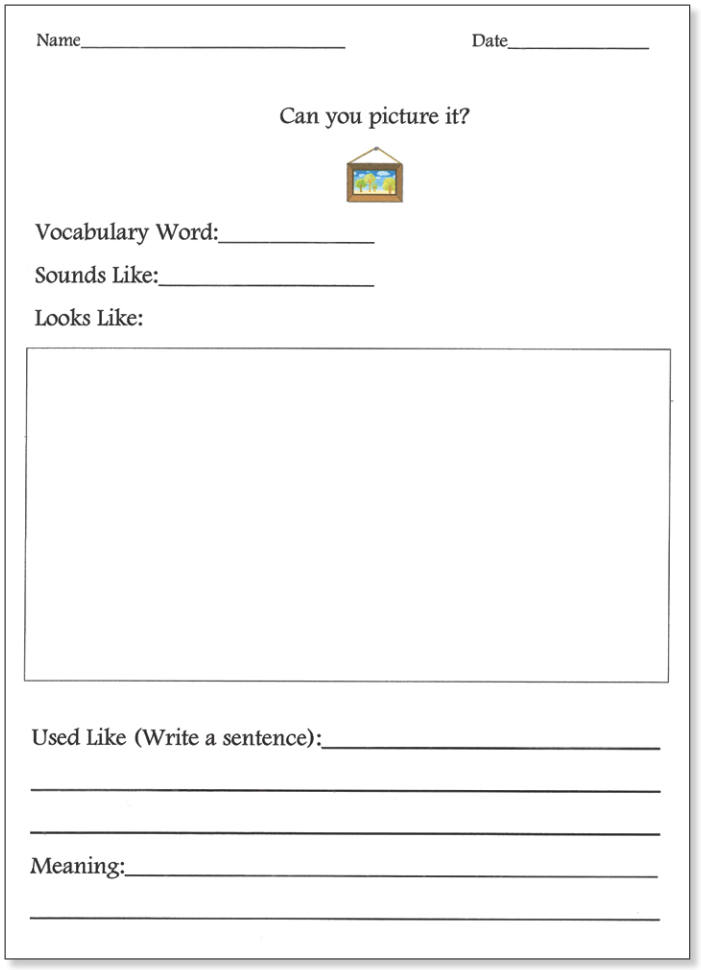
GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	x
6–12	x

Procedure:

1. Student writes the vocabulary word at the top of the organizer.
2. Then, the student researches the meaning of the word or has a discussion about the meaning. The student writes this definition on the bottom of the page.
3. Next, the student writes a word that they are familiar with that sounds like the new vocabulary word. This provides an auditory cue in addition to the visual cue for the new word. (Student writes this word on the "sounds like" line.)
4. Then, the student illustrates the word within the provided box.
5. Lastly, the student uses the word in a sentence.

Example:

BLANK GRAPHIC ORGANIZER


Name_____ Date_____

Can you picture it?

Vocabulary Word:_____

Sounds Like:_____

Looks Like:

Used Like (Write a sentence):_____

_____

_____

Meaning:_____

_____

STUDENT EXAMPLE:

Name_____ Date January 5th

Can you picture it?

Vocabulary Word: misplace

Sounds Like: retrace

Looks Like:

Used Like (Write a sentence): Her shoes were misplaced so she tried to find them in her room

Meaning: To lose something temporarily

Comment:

For abstract words, encourage students to create an image that illustrates the concept. Teachers may need to provide questions to help facilitate their thinking, such as: "Where would something like this take place?" or "What does this action look like?"

Source:
Claggett, F., with J. Brown. (1992)

Frayer Model

The Frayer Model is a popular model that supports students in learning new words and concepts by focusing on critical attributes or characteristics of the new idea followed by the presentation and evaluation of examples and non-examples. The use of a graphic organizer, such as the Frayer Model, can provide a useful tool to guide students through visualizing the relationships between attributes and examples.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	x
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

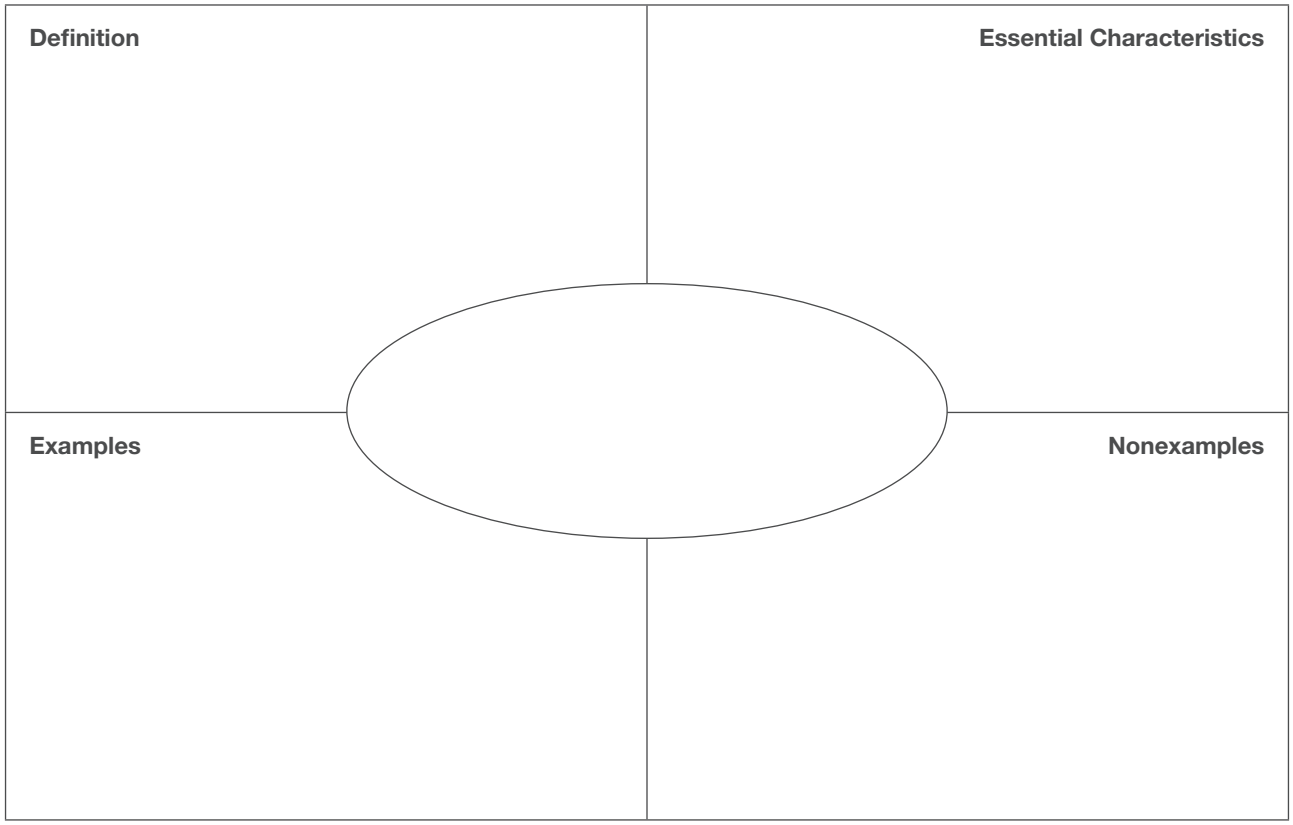
Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	

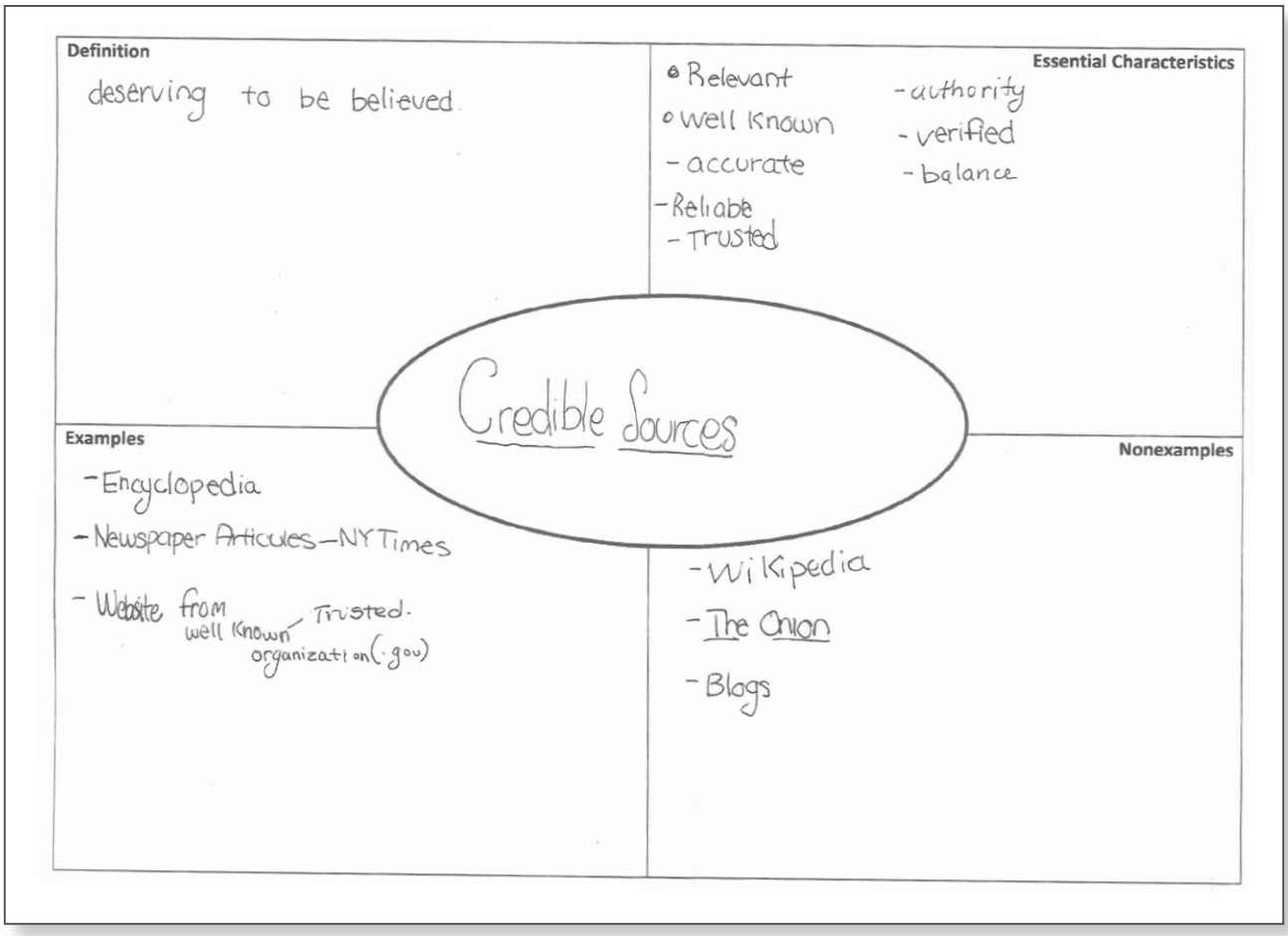
Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

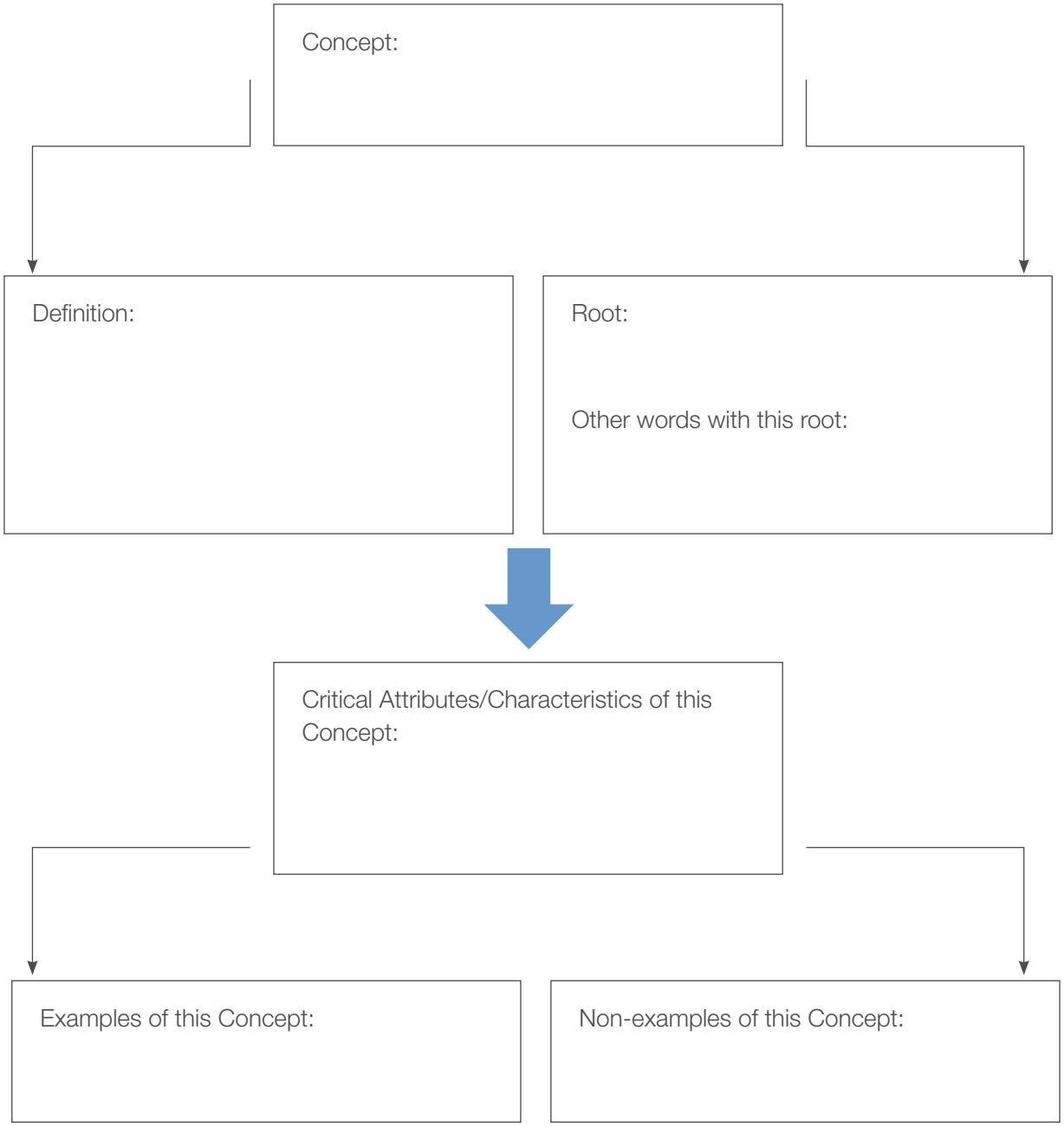
1. Clearly define and give attributes of the concept (for example, the attributes for the concept ***natural resources*** might be: things found in nature/not man made, useful to humans). When possible, show a picture or model of concept.
2. Provide examples of the new concept, taking care to link directly to the attributes noted earlier and explain why they are examples.
3. Provide non-examples (do not exhibit all of the attributes, gasoline), challenge the students to determine "why" it is NOT an example using the critical attributes (for example, gasoline is useful to humans but it is not found in nature; it is man-made).
4. Present additional unnamed examples (students have to figure out if it is an example or NON-example) and coach students through evaluating them against the critical attributes. Teachers should move from easier examples/non-examples to more complex or abstract examples until all students have some basic grasp.
5. Elicit from students additional examples and nonexamples of the concept; be sure to insist students justify their examples and nonexamples using the attributes (for example, "____ is an example of ____ because it is a thing/found in nature/useful to humans").

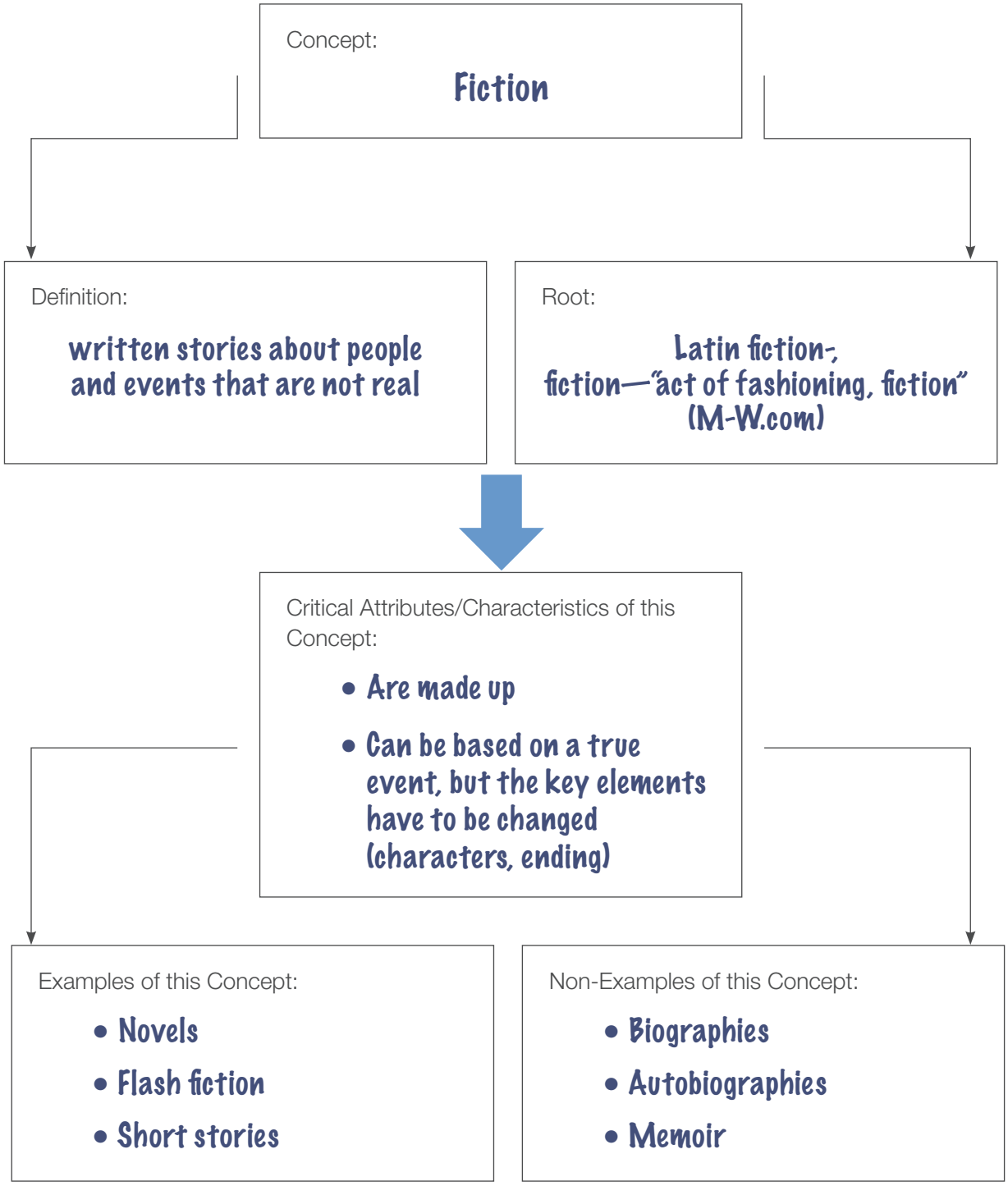
Examples:


Definition
Essential Characteristics
Examples
Nonexamples


Definition
deserving to be believed
Essential Characteristics
• Relevant
o well known
- accurate
- Reliable
- Trusted
- authority
- verified
- balance
Credible Sources
Examples
- Encyclopedia
- Newspaper Articles—NY Times
- Website from well known organization (.gov) Trusted.
Nonexamples
- Wikipedia
- The Onion
- Blogs

Alternative Version of a Frayer Model Template





Comments:

The Frayer Model can be time-consuming and should generally be used for concepts that are extremely important to a unit of study. Note also that not all terms lend themselves well to this method. For example, some terms may not have nonexamples. Teachers should test out a word or concept using the Frayer Model to ensure it is appropriate for this particular strategy.

Source:

Ellis, E. (1997)
Frayer, D.A., & Klausmeier, H.G. (1969)

Word Warmth (Depth of Prior Understanding)

This strategy provides students with a tool to help them gauge their level of understanding of targeted vocabulary words. Teachers can also utilize this strategy as a pre-assessment at the beginning of a unit by making note of which words appear in the "cold" column most often to help them identify which words they need to teach explicitly.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	
Independent	
Discussion	

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading	x
During Reading	
After Reading	

Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

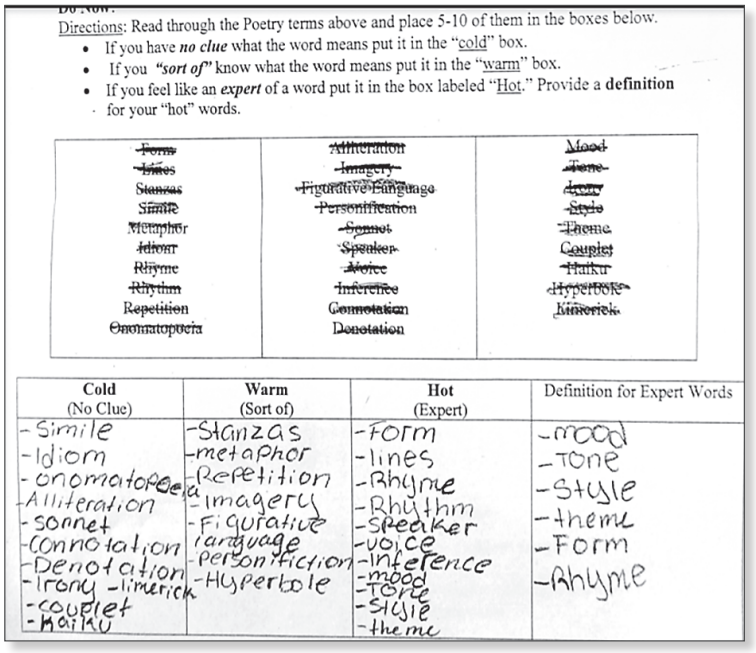
Procedure:

In Passages Academy's version of this activity, students are provided with a vocabulary list at the beginning of the unit or lesson, prior to any instruction with those words. Students are then asked to categorize the words based on their level of familiarity or understanding with the words:

- **Cold**—if they have "no clue" what the word means
- **Warm**—if they "sort of" know what the word means
- **Hot**—if they feel like they are an "expert" of that word (they must include a definition)

After they have finished categorizing the words, the students then create definitions for the "Hot" words, which are then checked according to a glossary, dictionary, or the teacher. Once the definitions have been established, students then seek out classmates who have "expert" understanding of the words in their "cold" list.

Example:



Directions: Read through the Poetry terms above and place 5-10 of them in the boxes below.

- If you have ***no clue*** what the word means put it in the "cold" box.
- If you ***"sort of"*** know what the word means put it in the "warm" box.
- If you feel like an ***expert*** of a word put it in the box labeled "Hot." Provide a **definition** for your "hot" words.

~~Form~~ ~~Lines~~ ~~Stanzas~~ ~~Simile~~ ~~Metaphor~~ ~~Idiom~~ ~~Rhyme~~ ~~Rhythm~~ Repetition ~~Onomatopoeia~~	~~Alliteration~~ ~~Imagery~~ ~~Figurative Language~~ ~~Personification~~ ~~Sonnet~~ ~~Speaker~~ ~~Voice~~ ~~Inference~~ Connotation Denotation	~~Mood~~ ~~Tone~~ ~~Irony~~ ~~Style~~ ~~Theme~~ Couplet ~~Haiku~~ ~~Hyperbole~~ ~~Limerick~~

Cold (No Clue)	Warm (Sort of)	Hot (Expert)	Definition for Expert Words
-Simile -Idiom -onomatopoeia -Alliteration -sonnet -Connotation -Denotation -Irony -limerick -couplet -Haiku	-Stanzas -metaphor -Repetition -Imagery -Figurative language -personification -Hyperbole	-Form -lines -Rhyme -Rhythm -Speaker -voice -Inference -mood -Tone -Style -theme	-mood -Tone -Style -theme -Form -Rhyme

Comments/Notes:

This is a modified version of a **'KWL'** Chart that gives students an opportunity to self-assess their knowledge of a set of vocabulary words, and also gives teachers the chance to pre-assess each student's knowledge of these words at the beginning of the unit. Since students will learn the definitions of words from each other, it is recommended that teachers continually check each student's understanding of these words and provide explicit instruction where needed. Teachers should also be aware that this activity can serve as a formative assessment at other times in the unit. Teachers can provide students with a clean copy of the vocabulary list and the chart, and ask students to categorize them again after they have received some instruction.

Adapted from:

Ogle, D.M. (1986)

Source:

Special thanks to Melissa Piccinonno and Chrystal Stewart from Passages Academy in New York City for sharing this vocabulary activity.

Word Splash

Word Splash is a vocabulary strategy that can be used before, during, and after the reading of a text. The teacher selects a collection (no more than 15) of key words, phrases, or concepts that students need to attend to from a text. Those words that are essential to the topic or unit of study are then "splashed" randomly on a chart, using an overhead projector or interactive white board. The students' task is to compose complete sentences that link two or more words, phrases, or concepts that anticipate how they might relate to the reading. A Word Splash serves to introduce new vocabulary, activate background knowledge, and set a purpose for reading.

USES	✔
Whole Class	x
Small Group	x
Independent	x
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–5	x
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	

Before Reading	x
During Reading	x
After Reading	x

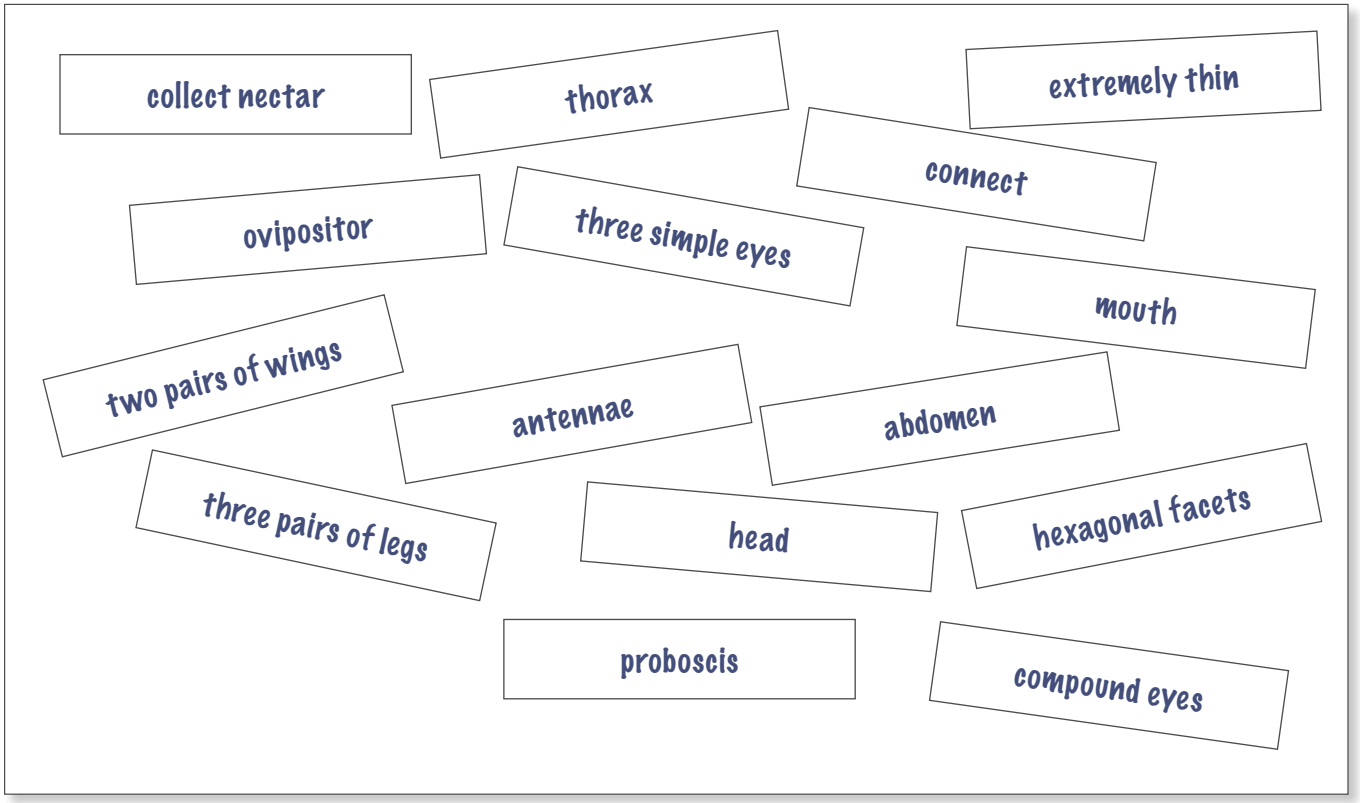
Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Procedure:

1. **Pre-reading:** Display selected terms that relate to the text to be read randomly and at angles on a visual (chart, overhead, or interactive white board). Explain to students that the words that they are looking at are related to the article they will be reading. Read the words aloud to students.
2. Instruct students to form triads or quads. Using the Write Around format (one paper/pen per group), students should brainstorm and generate complete statements (not just words or phrases) which predict the relationship between each term and the topic of study. They need to do this for all of the words on the Word Splash.
3. **During reading:** Once the students have generated statements for the terms, they are to read the text selection with their recently activated background knowledge and with purpose. They are to read and check the accuracy of their predictive statements and discover whether their understandings generated by the Word Splash can be confirmed or corrected.
4. **After reading:** Using the Write Around format again, the groups return to their list of statements to those that are verified in the text and revise any others so their statements are aligned with the information in the text.
5. When students have read and revised their statements, the teacher will then lead a discussion to review the terms and concepts to ensure that they can now make accurate connections between the terms and the topic.

Example:

HONEY BEE ANATOMY



Text Source:
www.buzzaboutbees.net/honey-bee-anatomy.html

OTHER VARIATIONS OF WORD SPLASH:

- If time is a concern, *Word Splash* can be used as just a pre-reading strategy. After students have completed their brainstorm and predictive statements for each term, they can turn to the text, read to confirm and/or revise where needed.
- The words and phrases selected should consist of a mix of essential terms and familiar terms.
- *Word Splash* can also be used for mediums other than written texts, such as viewing of a film, picture/photograph, or listening to a speaker. Create a *Word Splash* before these activities to activate background knowledge, introduce essential terms and concepts, and set purpose for viewing and/or listening.
- Use Word splash as a summarizing strategy: students read and then create their own *Word Splash* of what they consider to be the key terms and concepts in the text.

Source:
Hammond, W.D. & Raphael, T. (1999)

Kate Garnett's Vocabulary Game (or "Excuse me…")

This game has been distilled over decades of working with students with learning disabilities and their graduate tutors in the Hunter College C Learning Lab, the central integrative experience of the Hunter College Masters Program in Learning Disabilities. Many talented teachers have refined it, toiling to create game packs and inventing variations for kindergarteners all the way up to college students. It has a track record for strengthening conceptual distinctions and promoting vocabulary retrieval—for oral language, reading novels, and content classes. Its goal is both to clarify and retain concepts, nailing down terms, meanings, and distinctions in vocabulary and to activate word retrieval in a game-like activity that strengthens the mind's route to the words. While the game was originally developed as a practice game for students with learning disabilities, over the years the game has been greatly expanded for all students (including gifted) and for all kinds of learning (not just vocabulary). Teachers have made card packs for math, science, history, Spanish, decoding, syllable work, grammar, punctuation, novels, feelings, art, music, ESL, and basic concept development, to name a few. Students play the same pack multiple times as they tie down the distinctions, concepts, and critical terms. Used repeatedly across different areas, it can be a powerful "back-up" to classroom instruction through the grades.

USES	✔
Whole Class	
Small Group	x
Independent	
Discussion	x

GRADE LEVEL	✔
K–2	x
3–5	x
6–8	x
9–12	x

Before Reading
During Reading
After Reading

Assessment	x
Content Areas	x

Game Pieces:

- Target cards (further described below), visually distinct from Family cards
- Family cards (further described below) (3–6+ per Target)
- A reference list of Targets, with examples/help on back side of card

Optional, but very useful:

- A reference folder: front list of Targets, inside-examples in case they are needed.
- A mat for each player, with card outlines for piles to be orderly (particularly for younger children).

How to Play:

Goal: To capture Target piles, ending up with the most individual cards (not piles).

1. Lay Target cards face-up in center of table.
2. Shuffle Family cards and place in one pile face down—this is the pick-pile.
3. In each turn, a different player picks one Family card from the pick-pile, reading/speaking about it aloud. The player then places the appropriate face-up Target card on top of the just-picked card. This is now a mini-pile that "belongs to" that player, who places it in front him/herself.

NOTE: Always keep Target card itself showing as top card of the Target pile being built.

4. Players continue picking one-card-per-turn from the pick-pile, adding the matching face-up Target card and **verbalizing**. When there is no longer a face-up Target to match, a player scans his fellow players' piles and "takes" the match as his own (with eye contact and a polite request).
   - There is no penalty for not knowing.
   - Players may "call a friend" in the group for help.
   - Players may also consult the reference folder, as this is a learning game.
5. The game ends when the last card is drawn and matched with its Target pile.
6. The winner is the one with the most cards. Count number of cards, not number of piles.

Remember: Students verbalize, verbalize, verbalize, with every pick.
These cards are meant to spur discussion.

Notes on Playing with Your Students:

- Group size: best for 2–5 players
- Do play with the students, at least at the start and oversee it thereafter. Active modeling by the teacher ensures that the game is being played effectively. (Note that this is an out-loud game—students may try to play it with minimal verbalizing...do not allow! The idea is to verbalize the words.)
- Encourage thoughtful disputes about why a card might belong under more than one target… reasoned arguments mean they're thinking!
- When a card is misleading, dense, or just "off," tear it up on the spot and banish it from the pack. The kids will giggle as dealing with imperfections/mistakes is modeled and are no big deal.

Variations:

- Students work as partners.
- Allow anyone to help with the "reading" of cards or designate a reader for the group.
- Students take packs home to play/study.
- Students create Family cards to add to packs.
- Create an exam using all of the good questions in student-made packs.

How to Make Card Packs:

- Use 3x5 index cards or cut these to use half-size cards, or
- Use commercially designed "labels"
- Print card content onto labels and then adhere labels to 3/5 or half-size cards, or
- Create a card template in a word processing document and
- Photocopy onto 8 1/2 by 11 cardstock and cut up

Note: It is worthwhile to create basic, intermediate, and advanced packs on the same topic.

Tips on Making a Good Pack:

Making a game pack seems easy, but this can be deceiving. A good pack often takes time and refinement. Some have a knack for it, some don't. Do not hesitate to get a little help from friends.

The pack commonly contains 4–8 different Targets, each with 3–6+ accompanying Family cards.

- It can be played with fewer cards or more, depending.
- Put something on the back of cards (a colored dot?) to be able see at a glance in which pack each card belongs.

A pack is made of:

Target cards

- Need to look somehow distinct from Family cards
- On a different color card, or
- Outlined with a heavy line, or
- Written with a thicker, different-colored marker

plus

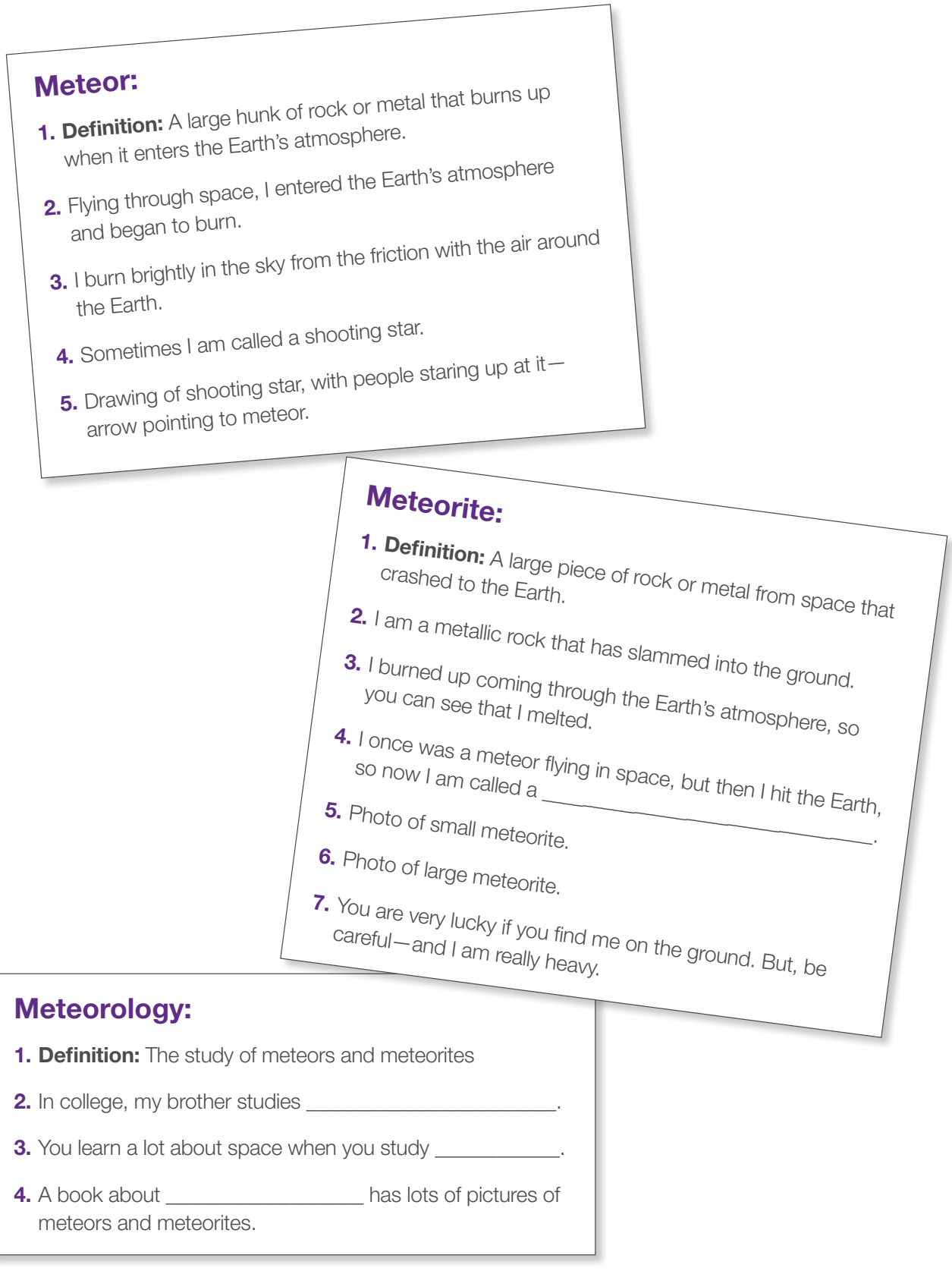
Family cards – that go with each Target (3–6+ Family cards to each Target)

These should be:

- Helpful, providing hooks and hints—not tricky. Teach, don't test
- Sentence examples of the word in use—multiple examples clarify concepts
- Pictures, illustrations—clip art, sketches, photos, cut from workbooks, student-drawn
- Kid-friendly definitions
- Synonyms and/or antonyms or other word relationships—label "Same as:" / "Opposite of:"

Sample Game Packs:

Anthony's meteor game: Meteor, meteorology, atmosphere, crater (individual card examples for these vocabulary words appear below)



Meteor:

1. **Definition:** A large hunk of rock or metal that burns up when it enters the Earth's atmosphere.
2. Flying through space, I entered the Earth's atmosphere and began to burn.
3. I burn brightly in the sky from the friction with the air around the Earth.
4. Sometimes I am called a shooting star.
5. Drawing of shooting star, with people staring up at it—arrow pointing to meteor.

Meteorite:

1. **Definition:** A large piece of rock or metal from space that crashed to the Earth.
2. I am a metallic rock that has slammed into the ground.
3. I burned up coming through the Earth's atmosphere, so you can see that I melted.
4. I once was a meteor flying in space, but then I hit the Earth, so now I am called a _____.
5. Photo of small meteorite.
6. Photo of large meteorite.
7. You are very lucky if you find me on the ground. But, be careful—and I am really heavy.

Meteorology:

1. **Definition:** The study of meteors and meteorites
2. In college, my brother studies _____.
3. You learn a lot about space when you study _____.
4. A book about _____ has lots of pictures of meteors and meteorites.

Atmosphere:

1. **Definition:** The layer of air surrounding the Earth
2. You cannot breathe in space because there is no _____.
3. Sort of like a blanket of oxygen and other gases around the Earth.
4. I am made of oxygen and other gases.
5. Millions of meteors fly through space; some of them enter the Earth's _____.
6. Illustration that includes the Earth's atmosphere, with an arrow pointing to it.

Meteorologist:

1. **Definition:** A scientist whose job is learning about space, meteors, and meteorites
2. When I grow up, maybe I will be a _____.
3. Some astronauts are also _____.
4. Photo or illustration of a meteorologist (perhaps looking through a telescope)

Crater:

1. **Definition:** A hole made when a meteor crashes into the Earth
2. When a meteor hits the ground, it makes an indentation called a _____.
3. I am the shape of the meteor that made me.
4. You can see lots of these on the moon.
5. Photo of crater on Earth.
6. Photo of the moon showing its craters.

Other topic ideas (and these should, of course, fit your curriculum content):

Geography: country, city, capital city, state, continent, coastline, inland

Food: fruit, vegetable, meat, grain, dairy

Geometry: acute, obtuse, angles pix, angle names, pix of shapes with arrow

Categories of all sorts: furniture, clothes, musical instruments, tools, transportation, ad infinitum, colors, money, feelings, parts of the body

Source:

Kate Garnett, Department of Special Education, Hunter College, CUNY, (kgarnett@hunter.cuny.edu)

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Crazy Quilt for Prefixes and Suffixes— A Game or Activity

There are scores of variations of this game, with game boards such as 'Magic Squares' or checkers. This variation provides practice in putting together prefixes, suffixes (which have been taught), and root words to create real words which are then defined.

Students can do this individually as an activity or in pairs as a game. They begin with the central prefix and suffix and see how many roots they can attach it to in order to create a real word which they can define. They list these on the template shown below the activities. When it is played as a game, the person who can find and define the most words wins that particular game. (And since this is a game that can be played more than once, there is always a chance for everyone to be a winner.)

sent	pare	amble
lude	**pre**	scient
dict	term	quel

dele	prepara	fric
na	**tion**	dissen
attrac	invita	preven

Crazy Quilt Prefix and Suffix Word Discoveries List

Online Resources

Sites for Educators

The Text Project—Developed by Dr. Elfrieda Hiebert, *The Text Project* provides an array of research and resources that help address such questions as which words warrant close attention and repeated instruction; which words are key to comprehension of text; relationships of words to others in their "word family"; and ways in which words function differently in literary versus informational text. The curated site also contains academic word lists useful as a resource in selecting words to teach; resources related to Common Core Learning Standards alignment, as well as many resources related to specific areas within literacy—including, but not limited to, vocabulary as a key element. textproject.org/about/ehh/

Word Generation-SERP—This robust vocabulary curriculum, informed by Dr. Catherine Snow and developed originally for the Boston Public Schools (and now used widely across the country), is an innovative approach to academic language development for students in Grades 4–8. SERP's original Word Generation program "includes weekly units about controversial topics each with brief lessons for middle school teachers in all academic subjects. SERP has recently created extended units of study about a variety of social studies and science topics. Fourth and fifth grade units are now available as well. This useful site provides ready-to-use resources." wordgen.serpmedia.org/

Vocabulary.com—Filled with resources in every area of vocabulary and includes a dictionary, a practice game, and many vocabulary lists to match to specific needs including SAT, ACT, and middle school. There are lists for morphology work, including prefix and suffix lists, along with vocabulary related to specific themes, texts, issues in the news, and much more. www.vocabulary.com/

IRIS Center—This site, developed at Vanderbilt University, provides educator learning modules on a variety of topics, particularly those that address needs of students with academic challenges and disabilities. Among these are multi-part modules on vocabulary instruction in elementary and secondary school as well as related resources. This site is already designed in such a way that schools and school support organizations can use the related segments separately to fit the smaller time frames of on-site professional development. iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/

Among their vocabulary-related modules:

Secondary Reading Instruction (Part 1): Teaching Vocabulary and Comprehension in the Content Areas—This module describes how teachers can incorporate vocabulary and reading comprehension skills instruction into content-area lessons and will introduce you to a variety of effective practices—including the use of graphic organizers—to help students better understand what they read.

Secondary Reading Instruction (Part 2): Deepening Middle School Content-Area Learning with Vocabulary and Comprehension Strategies—This module examines some of the reasons that adolescents struggle with content-area text and overviews effective strategies teachers can use to improve the vocabulary and comprehension skills of students with a wide range of abilities and across a variety of subjects.

Comprehension and Vocabulary: Grades 3–5—This case study unit focuses on comprehension and vocabulary strategies that correspond with 3–5 grade reading curriculum.

IRIS Center Information Briefs:

- A Multidimensional Approach to Vocabulary Instruction: Supporting English Language Learners in Inclusive Classrooms
- Best Practice for ELLs: Peer-Assisted Learning
- Best Practice for ELLs: Vocabulary Instruction
- Doing It Differently: Tips for Teaching Vocabulary
- The Clarifying Routine: Elaborating Vocabulary Instruction
- Vocabulary Development
- Vocabulary Instruction: Current Practice Alert

IRIS Center Video Vignettes:

- **Learning Difficult Vocabulary**—Teachers demonstrate strategies designed to help students learn difficult vocabulary. (Time: 2:16)

Center on Instruction—contains a broad range of research-based resources on instruction. While these resources are useful for improving the achievement of all students, they particularly target students in the lowest performing schools, students with difficulties learning mathematics, students needing intensive instruction, or special needs/diverse learners, including English language learners. Find recent research, practitioner guides, professional development materials, tools for educators, and examples from the field. Materials on this website can be downloaded and duplicated and are extremely useful as professional learning resources. The site contains many resources for vocabulary instruction across the grades. www.centeroninstruction.org

Sites for Students

While parts are a bit hokey, **My Vocabulary** is a site that will be appealing to students. Best suited for Grades 4–12, students can choose from activities such as vocabulary practice, word derivation, thematic linkages in words, vocabulary related to pieces of literature, test preparation, and more. For example, for SAT practice, they can select a set of words and then choose from a variety of activities (crossword puzzles, word finds, etc.) to practice the words, moving on to the next set when they or you decide to do so. www.myvocabulary.com

Flip a Chip is a versatile game for use with students who need some practice with vocabulary and verb tense. It allows students to combine a root word and affix and then decide where in a short cloze passage it would fit grammatically. It looks deceptively easy, but the verb-tense demands can be tricky and will keep your students thinking while they are having some fun with words. This game is one of the resources on the International Reading Association's Read Write Think site. It would be well worth your time to browse through the many resources on the mother site, www.readwritethink.org, which provides a wealth of material, including grade-by-grade resources for teachers. www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/flip

Blabberize—Students will find this site a riot. Upload your own photos or use their extensive repository of pictures. The site walks you through a few steps in which you upload the photo you want, add a moving mouth (I'm not kidding), record what you want it to say (and you can do so by using your computer microphone to record your script, calling in your recording to a special phone number, or using existing sound files on your computer), then publishing the image for use. It would be great for both writing and speaking as students can write their monologue (or dialogue if more than one student is involved) and edit it until it's publication ready; they would also typically practice performing the script before recording it. The site is useful for students who need motivation and practice in these areas and obviously useful for use with English language learners. Let the llama explain it to you on the site. www.blabberize.com

Dictionary Sites

Recommendations by Fisher & Frey in *Word Wise & Content Rich*

General Words: www.m-w.com

Visual Dictionary: www.infovisual.info

Rhyming Words: www.rhymezone.com

Spanish: www.spanishdict.com

World Languages: www.wordreference.com

Thesaurus: www.bartleby.com/thesauri

Five Visual Dictionaries and Thesauri for Students at the Free Technology for Teachers Site, found at the Free Technology for Teachers site, provides a description of these five highly useful resources along with several others. www.freetech4teachers.com/2013/10/five-visual-dictionaries-and-thesauri.html

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NYC Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Learning

Word Work and Word Play

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