

Vocabulary Ideas

Compiled by

Deb Smith

Book Suggestions:

Words, Words, Words written by Janet Allen

Teaching Vocabulary in All Classrooms written by Camille Blacowicz

Teaching Vocabulary to Improve Reading Comprehension by William E. Nagy

Bringing words to life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction

Websites:

www.readingquest.org

Possible Titles

Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children By
Betty Hart and Todd Risley

Experts write about vocabulary:

Bringing Words To Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction written by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan

What does it mean to know a word?

Dale offered a description of the extent of word knowledge in terms of four stages:

Stage 1: Never saw it before.

Stage 2: Heard it, but doesn't know what it means.

Stage 3: Recognizes it in context as having something to do with _____.

Stage 4: Knows it well.

Beck, McKeown and Omanson suggested that an individual's knowledge about a word can also be described as falling along a continuum. We suggested the following points on such a continuum.

- No Knowledge
- General sense, such as knowing *mendacious* has a negative connotation
- Narrow, context-bound, such as knowing that a *radiant* bride is a beautifully smiling bride, but unable to describe an individual in a different context as radiant.
- Having knowledge of a word but not being able to recall it readily enough to use it in appropriate situations.
- Rich, decontextualized knowledge of a word's meaning, its relationship to other words, and its extension to metaphorical uses, such as understanding what someone is doing when they are *devouring* a book.

Cronbach wrote in 1942:

- *Generalization*: The ability to define a word.
- *Application*: The ability to select or recognize situation appropriate to a word.
- *Breadth*: Knowledge of multiple meanings.
- *Precision*: The ability to apply a term correctly to all situations and to recognize inappropriate use.
- *Availability*: The actual use of a word in thinking and discourse.

What it means to know a word is clearly a complicated multifaceted matter, and one that has serious implications for how words are taught and how word knowledge is measured.

Stephen Krashen writes:

The Power of Reading written by Stephen Krashen explores English as a second language. On pages 8-10 the studies conclude that when an unfamiliar word was seen in print, “a small but statistically reliable increase of word knowledge” typically occurred. They found that the chance of a reader acquiring a word from one exposure was between 5-20%, depending on the testing method used. This may not seem like very much, but the Illinois team argues that when we consider the amount of reading children do, even this small effect results in a great deal of vocabulary growth. They estimate that if children read about 1 million words per year, just a 5% chance of acquiring a word’s meaning from context with each exposure will result in vocabulary growth of about 1000 words per year, “well enough to pass fairly discriminating multiple-choice tests”. They further concluded that 61% of basal texts give enough context clues to figure out meaning.

Jim Trelease writes:

Jim Trelease writes in the book, *The Read-Aloud Handbook* that the 3 B’s that improve vocabulary:

- Book ownership
- Book racks in the bathroom
- Bed lamps

Teachers add another B!

- Book Talks!!! And author’s visits to encourage reading.

The research does NOT support – assigning children the 20 vocabulary words, doing skill building exercises like drawing a line from the word to the definition, fill-in-the-blank, write three sentences with each word. On Friday they are tested. High readers would pass on Monday without the exercises, low readers wouldn’t pass on Friday, and then they blame themselves! (pages 22-24).

Allington writes that “poor readers don’t get to read as much in reading groups. Those who can read well are allowed to do more free reading. Those behind have to do more worksheets, workbook pages, and exercises, a practice that increases the reading GAP (page 24).”

Children’s vocabulary knowledge (page 32)

Children	Vocabulary Range
First Graders	5500-32000
Twelfth Graders	28200-73200

Self Selected Reading supports Vocabulary

If we believe that reading improves vocabulary development then we **MUST** make sure that **SELF-SELECTED READING** occurs **DAILY!!!!**

These are what help SSR to be successful in gaining vocabulary

- Access to books
- Comfortable reading environment
- Quiet reading environment
- Libraries are consistent and major source of books for free reading
- Reading aloud since children read more when they listen to stories and discuss stories
- Reading itself promotes reading
- Models – seeing others read (especially adults that the children look up to)
- Directing the children to read along with books that the children **CAN** read (just right books)
- Peer pressure – kids are influenced by their peers
- Book displays
- Paperbacks
- Light reading (comics; teen romances; series books) – leads to better reading

How is vocabulary achieved?

Words, Words, Words written by Janet Allen

How Well Do I Know These Words?

Teacher says word, reads word in context of a sentence, then gives opportunity to discuss the word, sentence, and possible meanings with a partner. After a minute the students would write the word in the first column if they still need help or in the second or third columns depending on their knowledge of the word in this context.

Directions: First, read the words at the bottom of the page silently. After you read each one, write the words from the bottom of this page in the column that best describes what you know about each one.

Don't know at all	Have seen or heard – don't know meaning	I think I know the meaning	I know a meaning

Words:

Word Attack Strategies according to Janet Allen:

Words in Context

Do I know the word?

How do I know the word?

Is the way I know the word helpful for my reading of this?

Do I need to know the word?

How can I figure out what it means?

Context

Structural Analysis

Resources

Activating Prior Knowledge

Allen's students suggested these strategies:

1. Look at the word in relation to the sentence
2. Look the word up in the dictionary and see if any meanings fit the sentence.
3. Ask the teacher
4. Sound it out
5. Read the sentence again
6. Look at the beginning of the sentence again
7. Look for other key words in the sentence that might tell you the meaning
8. Think about what makes sense
9. Ask a friend to read the sentence to you
10. Read around the word then go back again
11. Look at the picture if there is one
12. Skip it if you don't need to know it

Rivet

See *Guided Reading the Four Blocks Way*, pages 70-74.

Guess The Covered Word

See *Month By Month Phonics for _____ (your) Grade*

Exclusion Brainstorming (Blachowicz, 1986)

See *Words, Words, Words* written by Janet Allen (pages 46-47)

Exclusion Brainstorming helps students activate and build prior knowledge of a topic as a way of learning new words or phrases that connect to a larger concept. Regardless of their choices, thinking and talking about why a word might or might not appear enlarges students' thinking about language as it relates to a specific event. Students can revisit the words after they've read the material to see whether their guesses have held true. Talking about what words fit, how words they didn't anticipate made their way into the text about the topic, and ways that common words took on uncommon meanings in relation to the topic are all rich learning experiences.

1. Write the vocabulary words on the board including one that is not in today's reading.
2. Discuss their meanings.
3. Have students predict which word will NOT be in today's reading.
4. Record predictions on the board.
5. Read the text
6. Note: sometimes the word does appear in the text accidentally. Students love to "catch" the teacher. If this happens, have the class help you come up with a new word to use next year.
7. Allow students to share sentences from the book with the vocabulary words in them.
8. Which word was not in the text?

Predict-O-Gram (Blachowicz)

See *Words, Words, Words* written by Janet Allen (pages 47-48)

Similar to Exclusion Vocabulary. Known and Unknown words, phrases, places and dates are combined and used to predict story plots and character relationships. The predict-o-gram focuses students' discussion around a narrow selection of words as they anticipate how these words will be included in the story.

Knowledge Chart

See *Words, Words, Words* written by Janet Allen (pages 48-49)

Show students a word representing a concept. Have them tell you what they already know. Read about the concept. Write about new knowledge.

Knowledge Chart

Word: _____

Prior Knowledge about	New Knowledge about

Vocabulary Clustering

You may wish to do the vocabulary clustering during the working with words block due to the amount of the time needed. This activity requires higher-order thinking skills to think about words and their relationships and to verbalize those connections. The groups that I came up with are: people, places, and things. You will be amazed at how the students group the words.

Context-Content-Experience

See *Words, Words, Words* written by Janet Allen (See pages 51-52)

The context-content-experience organizer identifies possible definitions based on context, then zeros in on a consensus definition. The teacher prompts show how the word might be used in various content areas in school and life. Finally, students write about personal experiences associated with the word or concept.

Linear Arrays

See *Words, Words, Words* written by Janet Allen (See pages 52-53)

See *Teaching Vocabulary to Improve Reading Comprehension* by William Nagy (pages 16-20)

Linear arrays are visual representations of degree. An activity like this helps students examine subtle distinctions in the words. Linear arrays may be more appropriate for displaying other types of relationships among words. For example, many sets of words differ essentially in degree: annoyed, angry, enraged, and furious; or lukewarm, warm, hot, scalding. The relationship among such words can be illustrated visually by arranging them in a line.

This is a graphic organizer for depicting graduations between two related words:

freezing – cool – tepid – hot – boiling

minute – small – average – huge – immense

private – sergeant – captain – lieutenant – colonel

past – yesterday – present – tomorrow – future.

Another example: Linear Arrays for Adverbs. First the teacher asks whether her students know what *never* means and elicits examples of how *never* is used in everyday speech. She repeats with *always*. Then she writes *always* at the top of a sheet of paper, *never* at the bottom, and asks the students to generate a list of adverbs that would fall somewhere in between. Finally she writes each of the students' suggestions on a separate card and has her students arrange the cards in descending order:

always

certain

frequently

often

likely

probably

more than even

even chance

less than even occasionally

unlikely

seldom

rarely

never

Context – Content - Experience

Context:

Word: _____

Definition:

Possibilities:

From context:

Common definition:

Specialized Examples:

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Personal Connection:

Robust Vocabulary Instruction compiled by Linda Kucan

Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction

Written by I.L. Beck, M.G. McKeown, and L. Kucan

Oral Language and Vocabulary Development

- Children differ markedly in the language and especially the vocabulary they have upon entering kindergarten.
- The gap between children with advanced language and children with restricted language grows wider during the elementary years.
- Students who enter fourth grade with significant vocabulary deficits show increasing problems with reading comprehension. Research evidence suggests that instead of “catching up,” these students fall increasingly behind.
- If we want to support children in learning to think and read, then we will have to enrich their oral language development during the early years of schooling.

A problem with vocabulary development in Kindergarten is that the kinds of texts that children can read in Kindergarten and first grade are limited in rich opportunities for vocabulary and conceptual development. The solution is to use a variety of texts in a variety of reading situations – read aloud, shared reading, and independent reading – to create a context for vocabulary and conceptual development.

There are Three Tiers of words

Tier 1 – basic words, well known, used often: clock, baby

Already in oral language concepts

Tier 2 – high-frequency words used by mature language users in a wide range of contexts: coincidence, absurd

Surprising, precise and conversation

Tier 3 – low-frequency words, often limited to specific content areas: cirrus, mollusk
Not used in many contexts

Criteria for two tier words

- Useful – can be used in many contexts for reading, writing, speaking. How generally useful is this word? Is it a word that students are likely to meet often in other texts? Will it be of use to students in describing their own experiences?
- Understandable – children have some ideas or concepts to connect to the new word. How does this word relate to other words, to ideas that students know or have been learning? Does it directly relate to some topic of study in the classroom? Or might it add a dimension to ideas that have been developed?
- Interesting – What does this word bring to a text or a situation? What role does the word play in communicating the meaning of the context in which it is used?

Robust Vocabulary Instruction Steps:

- A book a week, choose 3 words for the week.
- Select Tier 2 words
- Develop student friendly definitions
- Read book aloud
- Introduce words and definitions
- Engage students in thinking about and using the words
- Provide multiple encounters with the words in a variety of contexts over time
- Periodically review words

Problems with dictionary definitions –

- Dictionary definitions must be brief due to space restrictions. The brevity of many dictionary definitions leaves too much assumed, and young learners often make incorrect assumptions or are unable to put the ideas together at all.
- Dictionary definitions are so often unhelpful due to the format.
- There are four characteristics features of definitions that get in the way of understanding word meanings:
 1. Weak Differentiation – the definition does not differentiate how the target word is different from other similar words, how it is a specific case of a more general idea.
 2. Vague language – definitions provide little information.
 3. More Likely Interpretation – A young learner may interpret the definition incorrectly.
 4. Multiple pieces of information – dictionary doesn't explain how the separate pieces relate to build an understanding of the word.

The problems with dictionary definitions lead us to develop **student friendly definitions**.

Disrupt: break up, split

This could easily be interpreted as physical breaking, as in “we disrupted the candy bar so we could all share it.” What’s the nature of disrupt that needs to be captured? It would seem to be that disrupting is likely rudely stopping something that’s going on, or causing a problem that makes some activity cease. Using these ideas might lead to the student friendly explanation: **“to cause difficulties that stop something from continuing easily or peacefully.”**

To make student friendly definitions you need to:

1. Select some words that your students are currently learning.
2. Look up the words in the dictionary or glossary
3. Think about the definitions from a young learner’s point of view
4. How might you characterize the words so that their meanings are specific?
5. Create student friendly explanations for the words you selected. Try to include *something*, *someone* or *describes* in your explanations.
6. Share the explanations you created with your students. Ask them to compare your explanations with the definitions provided in the dictionary or glossary.

EXAMPLE Using *Dinosaur Bob*:

Dinosaur Bob tier two words

adventure	rendition	beloved	attached	amazing
reasoned	grouched	luxury	jealous	eventful
wandered	delight	pleaded	envy	routine
menace	rousing	meekly		

Selected Tier Two words from *Dinosaur Bob*

pleaded reasoned envy delight menace

Child friendly definitions:

pleaded – asked for something with great feeling

reasoned – thought about something and figured it out

envy – feeling of unhappiness because of what someone has

delight - joy

menace – someone or something that is annoying or causes trouble

How to Introduce words

Locate sentences in the story that includes the new word.

Talk about the meaning of the word.

Relate the word in a context different from the book content. Talk it to bridge to their world. Related only to the context of the book if you don't do this. This is key.

Introduce words example 1:

Pleaded means “asked for something with great feeling” (child friendly definition developed by teacher ahead of time).

“Can we keep him?” pleaded Scotty’s sisters, Zelda and Velma. (sentence from *Dinosaur Bob*).

How do Scotty’s sisters feel about Dinosaur Bob?

If you really wanted something, you might plead for it, too. For example, you really wanted to go outside for recess, you might plead for that. When else might you plead for something?

Introduce words example 2:

A menace is someone or something that is annoying or causes trouble (child friendly definition developed by teacher ahead of time).

“That thing’s a menace to the community!” she grumped. (sentence from *Dinosaur Bob*).

What does Mrs. DeGlumly think of Dinosaur Bob?

Who or what might be a menace in our school or community?

It is important to have multiple encounters in a variety of contexts. Here are several ideas:

pleaded reasoned envy delight menace

Provide multiple encounters with the words in a variety of contexts over time

In introducing words, here are things to keep in mind:

- Make word meanings explicit and clear. Develop student-friendly explanations or create instructional contexts for discussing word meanings.
- Get students actively involved with thinking about and using the meanings right away.
- Full understanding and spontaneous, appropriate use of new words develops gradually, but a strong start is essential to allowing those processes to occur.

Word Associations

After having presented explanations for _____, _____, and _____, we asked students to associate one of their new words with a presented word or phrase. Explaining helps build the association. In each case students were asked why they decided on the connection they had made. Associating a known word with a newly learned word reinforces even further the meaning of the word. Note that the associations are not synonyms; rather, the student must develop a relationship. Having students explain their reasoning is an essential component of the kind of instruction that requires learners to process information – directly deal with information by considering and mentally manipulating it.

Examples:

Which word goes with a feeling of unhappiness? Why? (envy; menace; pleaded)

Which word goes with a feeling of wanted something? Why?

Word Networks

Examples:

What words come to mind when you think of the word reasoned? Why?

What words come to mind when you think of the word delight? Why?

Have you ever?

This activity helps students associate newly learned words with contexts and activities from their own experience. Thus, it helps students understand that they have a place for the word in their vocabularies. In the activity the students are asked to Describe a time when you might....”

Examples:

When might you say that a dog was a menace?

When might you describe someone as being filled with envy?

Applause! Applause!

For this activity, students are asked to clap in order to indicate how much they would like (not at all, a little bit, a lot) to be described by the target words. And, as always, **why** they would feel that way.

Clap to show how much you would like to be described by the word *menace*.
Clap to show how much you would like to have a feeling of *delight*.

Sentence Stems / Ideas Completions

In contrast to the traditional “write a sentence using the new word,” which can result in meaningless use (example, “I saw a virtuoso.”), we provided students with sentence stems that required them to integrate a word’s meaning into a context in order to explain a situation. The key to effective activities is that they require students to attend to a word’s meaning in order to apply it meaningfully to an example situation.

For example,

The audience asked the virtuoso to play another piece of music because...
The skiing teacher said Maria was a novice on the ski slopes because...

When might you...

How might you...

Why might you...

Because the student reasoned, she was able to _____
The student had a feeling of envy because he _____
Everyone said that the cat was a menace because _____

Questions, Reasons, Examples

- If you were taking a test, why might you need to reason?
- If you really thought you needed something, how might you plead for it?
- If you walking around a dark room, you need to do it *cautiously*. Why? What are some other things that need to be done *cautiously*?
- What would you do to *impress* your teacher? Why?
- Which of these things that might be *extraordinary*? Why or why not? Why or why not?
 1. A shirt that was uncomfortable, or a shirt that washed itself?
 2. A flower that kept blooming all year; or a flower that bloomed for 3 days?
 3. A person who has a library card, or a person who has read all the books in the library?

Get into a group and act it out.

Making Choices

If any of the things I say is an example of reasoning, say “here, here.” If not, don’t say anything.

1. Working with a partner to finish a puzzle.
2. Running around on the playground.
3. Talking to the coach to figure out a game plan.
4. Trying to find a missing pet.

If any of the things I say might be examples of people clutching something, say “clutching.” If not, don’t say anything.

1. Holding on tightly to a purse
2. Holding a fistful of money
3. Softly petting a cat’s fur
4. Holding on to branches when climbing a tree
5. Blowing bubbles and trying to catch them

Alike and Different

What is alike and different about these words:

envy and delight?

pleaded and reasoned?

menace and delight?

Examples and Nonexamples

Which would be something to plead for?

- new playground equipment
- less recess time

Which would be examples of a menace?

- a swarm of bees
- a litter of kittens

Using All The Words

Conclude the lesson with a short activity in which all the words that had been considered during the lesson are brought together. Each of these is initiated with a statement like, “We’ve talked about these three (or five) words (specify the words). Let’s think about them some more.” The format asked the child to make a choice and to explain the choice. The explanation is the most important part, because it requires the child to explicitly think through how the word fits the choices in the questions in order to express the relationship between the example and the word. The purpose of the “Using All the Words” activities were both the way to get another encounter with each word and a way to get another encounter with each word and a way to bring all the words together to begin the process of having them become a natural part of the children’s language rather than isolated, specialized items.

1. Sentences – sometimes more than one of the instructed words can be used in a sentence. For example, would you *prefer* to *budge* a sleeping lamb or a *ferocious* lion?
2. Same Format – Finally, one can bring some coherence to an activity by using the same format for all three words. Several examples follow:
 - + If you satisfy your *curiosity*, do you need to find out how more or have you found out all that you need? Why?
 - + If a dog was acting *menacing*, would you want to pet it or move away? Why?
 - + If you wanted to see something *exquisite*, would you go to a museum or a grocery store? Why?
 - + Is *imagine* more like dreaming or sneezing? Why?
3. Children create examples – Have the children create examples.
 - + If there was an *emergency* at an amusement park, what might have happened?
 - + If you had a friend who watched TV all the time, how might you coax him into getting some *exercise*?

Robust Vocabulary Instruction examples:

Grade Level	Book	Author	Vocabulary Words
Kindergarten	Annie and the Wild Animals	Jan Brett	imagine snarl grumpy
Kindergarten	Biggest Nose	Kathy Caple	continue measure commotion
Kindergarten	Charlie Anderson	Barbara Ambercrombie	decide disappear prowl
Kindergarten	Shelia Rae the Brave	Kevin Henkes	fearless convince dashed
First Grade	Brave Irene	William Steig	trusted coaxed cherish
First Grade	Extraordinary Egg	Leo Lionni	impress triumphant extraordinary
First Grade	Stephanie's Ponytail	Robert Munsch	strange definitely bunch
Second Grade	Little House	Virginia Lee Burton	notice shabby glance
Second Grade	Wolf!	Becky Bloom	emergency concentrate impressed
Second Grade	Picnic at Mudsock Meadow	Patricia Polacco	admit eerie vanished

Children's Books That Celebrate Vocabulary

Double Trouble in Walla Walla written by Andrew Clements

Frindle written by Andrew Clements

Miss Alaineous: A Vocabulary Disaster by Debra Frasier

A Series of Unfortunate Events by Lemon Snicket

The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster

The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin

Amelia Bedelia by Peggy Parish

The King Who Rained by Fred Gwynne

A Little Pigeon Toad by Fred Gwynne

A Chocolate Moose for Dinner by Fred Gwynne

Alphabet Soup by Kate Banks

Word Wizard by Cathryn Falwell

The Word Eater by Mary Amato

The Ink Drinker by Eric Sanvoisin

Gipe's Context Method

Read three sentence passage that used an unknown word in a defining context. After reading the students respond in writing to a question or statement with information from their personal experience that further exemplified the meaning of the unknown word. (For example, Write down something a *barbarian* might do at the dinner table.)

Beck and McKeown

Children are asked to describe a situation involving a target word, such as “tell me about something you might want to *eavesdrop* on” or “describe the most *melodious* sound you can think of.”

Vocabulary Instructional Unit that increased comprehension

The word must not be established in their vocabulary.

The word must actually be used in the selection read today.

The word must accurately describe a key character, important event, idea, or theme in the selection.

Steps

Underline the vocabulary words as they find them while they read

Predict the word's meaning from the context of the story

Look up the word in the dictionary and decide which definition appropriate to the context

Class discussion of the word as it directly tied into the plot, theme, and characters of the story.

Teacher chooses at first

Students gradually take over control of choosing vocabulary words. Does the word make sense in this context? Does the word describe the character accurately? Does this make sense according to what the character actually did? How do you know?

Harmon's Suggestions for Self Monitoring Vocabulary

- Do I know this word?
- Do I need to know this word to understand what I am reading?
- If I think this word is important, what do I already know about it?
- What does the word have to do with what I am reading? What is it referring to?
- How is it used in the sentence? Does it describe or show action?
- Do I see any word parts that make sense?

Judy's Vocabulary Idea for third graders:

"I introduce the words on Monday; somehow every class seems to adopt their own method of introduction. This class has me pass out all the words face down (I printed them all on wordcards and laminated them). Then the kids form 2 lines in the front of the room. First the kids who don't know their word try to pronounce it and ask for help with the definition. Second, the kids who do know their words tell us what they mean. As each child finishes, she places the word in the pocket chart by our reading table and they stay there for the rest of the week. Then, as I said before, the kids try all week to use those words in sentences and find them in print."

Wordstorming

1. Ask students to write down all the words they can think of related to a given concept, theme, or target word.
 2. When students have exhausted their contributions, help them add to their individual lists by giving some specific directions:
 - Can you think of words that describe someone without _____?
 - Can you think of words that would show what someone might see, hear, feel, touch, smell, in a situation filled with _____?
 3. Ask the students to group and label their words.
- Introduce any words you think should be included and ask students to put them in the right group.

Word Map created by Catherine Rosenbaum:

Word acquisition includes: *association, comprehension, and generation*. Associative knowledge is able to link a new word with a specific definition or a single context. To possess comprehensive knowledge, a child must either demonstrate a broad understanding of a word in a sentence or be able to use definitional information to find an antonym, classify words into categories and so forth. Finally generative knowledge is characterized by the ability to produce a novel response to a word, such as an original sentence, or a restatement or the definition in the child's own words.

Steps:

Choose 4-5 words

Model the word map with one word

Teacher reads the chapter aloud

Teacher models the word map with one more word

Students then choose one word from the list to do the word map with.

Another	Definition	Synonym
Unique expression, association, or example	New word and page number	Non example of the word (might be an antonym)
Sentence from the book		
My original sentence		

Word Storm: Connecting vocabulary to the student's database
Ronald M. Klump
The Reading Teacher
Volume 48, Number 3, November 1994

Word Storm

Name:

To understand a word, it is sometimes better to know more than just the dictionary definition. A word map lets you write down different types of information to help you understand what a word means and the many ways in which the word can be used.

1. What is the word? _____

2. Write the sentence from the text in which the word is used:

3. What are some words that you think of when you hear this word:

4. What are some different forms of this word?

5. Name three people who would be most likely to use the word besides the teachers:

- _____
- _____
- _____

6. What are some other ways of saying the same thing?

7. Make up a sentence using this word. Let your sentence tell what the word means.

Fun with Vocabulary

By Janet Towell

The Reading Teacher

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Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy – the students locate a new word in their environment. Students are then asked to identify where they found the word, the context, and the importance of the word and why they selected it.

Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic-Tactile – Trace the word with their finger while pronouncing each syllable until it can be written by memory. Ghost writing, writing in the air, writing on a child's back can be helpful with this technique.

Onsets and Rimes – teaching onsets and rimes builds phonemic awareness.

Color Shock – write each word or multiplication fact or spelling words in different colors starting with green for go to designate the beginning of the word. (Improves directionality, visual discrimination, sequential memory skills.)

Clusters – grouping words that relate to a single concept. Clustering is the process of relating a target word to a set of synonyms or other associated words. Clustering enables students to understand the target word better and retain it for a longer period of time.

ABC books – children create alphabet books based on selected themes, topics or units of study. Students are encouraged to identify synonyms, antonyms, and parts of speech for their self selected words. Students can be motivated to discover words through illustrations on the basis of their prior knowledge or schemata instead of memorizing words from a required list.

Anagrams - See *The Eleventh Hour* by Graeme Base (1989) for an example of using anagrams and additional clues to solve a very complicated mystery. Students can figure out lists of words in which the words have been scrambled. They are word detectives.

Book Boxes – called souvenirs or story bits in four blocks. Collections of items related to words and key ideas. Showing real items to build word knowledge.

Boxes for visual configuration – Emphasizing length and shape. We do this on word wall words.

Banks for words – personal word walls

Unknown words – Use the coaching steps in *Guided Reading the Four Blocks Way* book, chapter 21

List-Group-Label – this strategy works really well with the book, *Animalia* by Graeme Base (1987). Working in cooperative groups, students list as many words as possible that begin with a specific letter on a piece of chart paper. List for 15 minutes. Then sort the words into categories. This makes the words easier to remember and more meaningful.

Language Experience Approach – is the premise that written language is actually oral language in printed form. Dictated stories, word banks, and creative writing are emphasized. Language experience is an effective way to teach sight words to beginning readers or to older remedial readers who have limited sight vocabularies. Repeated reading is encouraged. There is a natural motivation because the stories are usually related to the students' interests. Students are able to read successfully. Publishing stories in book formats for class library can be powerful for building vocabulary as well as self-esteem.

Active involvement – If vocabulary instruction is to be effective, the students must be actively involved. Students should do nonverbal skits, acting out the meanings of the words, kinesthetic-tactile learning. Vocabulary words linked to music, rewriting songs with different lyrics, finger spelling with the manual alphabet are more strategies.

Repetition – repeated access to the same text; repeated readings, choral reading, Reader's Theatre, Tape-recorded books, patterned or predictable books, basals, rhymes in poetry

Rhymes -

Riddles – Riddles introduce vocabulary in a new and unusual way. Students write the answers to riddles and also can be encouraged to write riddles and guess the answers to the riddles that others write.

Roots – Studying Latin, Greek and English roots

Yarns –

Teacher chooses five meaningful vocabulary words from their next story (next chunk that will be read).

Divide the class into cooperative groups of 4-5 students.

Challenge them to see which group can create the wildest most exaggerated story using the same five words.

Then let them read the real story and compare!

ABC Brainstorm

See www.readingquest.org for more directions

What Is An ABC Brainstorm?

Before having your students talk about a major topic, it's essential to activate their background knowledge about it. One way to do this is the ABC Brainstorm. The idea is meant to be fairly simple. Students try to think of a word or phrase associated with the topic, matched to each letter of the alphabet.

How Does It Work?

Have students list all the letters of the alphabet down a sheet of paper (or use the printable ABC Brainstorm sheet available through ReadingQuest), leaving room beside each letter to write out the rest of a word or phrase. Let them work individually at first, thinking of as many words as they can that could be associated with the topic you identify. Do note: The topic should be big and general enough that students can actually think of a lot of possible terms. Then, in no particular order, let them begin filling in the blanks beside each letter of the alphabet. For instance, if the topic were **World War II**, students might list **Allies**, **Bombers**, **Concentration Camps**, **Dachau**, **Europe**, **French Resistance**, **Germany**, **Hitler**, **Italy**, **Japan**, and so on.

It seems to work well if you give students enough time to think of a lot of ideas, but then let them pair up or work in small groups to fill in blanks for letters they had not yet completed. In this way, you can let the brainstorming function like a Think-Pair-Share. This would be the "Pair" phase. Then, go around the room or get students to report out ("Share") possible terms for the different letters of the alphabet. Be open to a wide range of possibilities! Make sure students know that you're not looking for exact answers, just justifiable and relevant ones.

What Sorts of Topics Are Good for an ABC Brainstorm?

I say, keep it more broad and relevant. Topics like government, Islam, war (or a specific war), the Great Depression, or a broad geographical region are probably pretty fertile for an ABC Brainstorm. Topics previously studied, about which students know much, can be good recap brainstorms. This might include topics like The Gilded Age, Progressivism, a given decade (the Sixties or the Roaring Twenties, for instance), or capitalism. It's doubtful whether a narrow topic (Saddam Hussein, Circular Flow Diagram, the Constitution) would provide enough latitude for a good ABC Brainstorm, but you won't know until you try.

Carousel Brainstorm

See www.readingquest.org for more directions

What Is a Carousel Brainstorm?

Whether activating background knowledge or checking understanding after studying a topic, a carousel brainstorm allows you to have students pull out and think about what they know about subtopics within a larger topic.

How Does It Work?

Begin by putting students in groups of 3 or 4. Give each group a sheet of newsprint/chart paper. Each group's sheet has a different subtopic written on it. One student serves as the recorder and has a particular color of magic marker. Explain that the students will have a short time (say, 30 seconds) to write down on their chart paper all the terms they can think of that they associate with their topic. Explain upfront that you will then have them pass their sheet over to the next group, and a new topic will be passed to them. Make it clear which direction you'll have them pass the sheets so that this is orderly AND so that each group will receive each of the subtopic sheets. At the end of the 30 seconds, tell them to cap their markers, remind them to keep their markers, but have them pass their sheets to the next group according to the pre-determined path for passing. After three or four passings, you will probably want to extend the writing time to 40 seconds, then 45 seconds, and perhaps up to a minute, because all the easy ideas will have been taken by previous groups, and the students will need more time to talk about and think of other terms to be added to the brainstorm list. Keep having students brainstorm, write, and pass until each group has had a chance to add ideas to each of the subtopic sheets. Let them pass it the final time to the group who had each sheet first.

Example

The first time I saw this strategy used was actually in an 8th grade science class. The topic was the Circulatory System, and students had read the textbook chapter on it the night before. The teacher began the day with Carousel Brainstorming. The individual chart paper sheets were labeled with subtopics relevant to the Circulatory System: Heart, Lungs, Capillaries, Arteries, Veins, Exchange of Gases, and so on.

Isn't This Like "Graffiti?"

Yep, almost exactly like it, but the difference is that with Graffiti, the sheets are posted on the wall, and the students move around from sheet to sheet. With Carousel Brainstorming, the students stay seated and the sheets are passed. Otherwise, it's hard to tell the difference.

How Might I Push It a Step Further?

I like to go beyond the simple brainstorm and have the group who started with the sheet look it over when it returns to them, note all the other ideas that were added after it was passed around to the other groups, and then circle the three terms that they think are most essential, most important, or most fundamental to the topic at the top of their sheet. That way, they spend some time critically evaluating all the possible terms and topics and making decisions about which are most representative of or most closely associated with the given topic. Sometimes, students do this quickly or almost glibly, but often the groups will spend quite a while hashing this out. That tells me that they are really thinking about it. Then, I'll have them try to write a definition for their topic, a statement that explains to someone who is unfamiliar with it what that topic is really about. I tell them that since they have already circled three terms that they consider essential or fundamental to their topic, they'll probably want to USE those three terms in their definition, or be darned sure to consider them for inclusion in their definition. While this has the limitation of having students think deeply about only ONE of the subtopics (the sheet they have before them, not all the other subtopics on the other sheets), I still find great value in the depth of thinking and conversation as we take the strategy this much further.

Words, Words, Words

Written by Janet Allen

Alternatives to, “Look It Up in the Dictionary!”

Why looking it up in the dictionary doesn't work:

- Kids copy the shortest definition.
- The kids don't think about the context of how the word is being used to decide what definition to use.
- Kids don't internalize a meaning during the reading of the words they looked up in the dictionary.
- The definition can be inaccurate for geographic location.
- The dictionary definition may not be understandable if applied literally. The sum of the parts do not equal the whole.
- Definition does not contain enough information to allow someone to use the word correctly.

New words need to be integrated into the learner's prior knowledge, repeated in multiple contexts, and used in meaningful ways.

List-Group-Label

1. List all the words you can think of related to _____ (major concept text).
2. Combine your list with 3-4 other people.
3. Group the words that you have listed by looking for words that have something in common.
4. There may be a miscellaneous category in which they can put no more than 3-4 words
5. Once words are grouped, decide on a label for each group.

Example of List-Group-Label developing the Major concept – **family**

Brittany's List

Dog	cousin	niece	brother-in-law	turtle	sister-in-law
Mom	brother	stepmom	fish	dad	
Sister	aunt	stepsister	bird	stepdad	
Iguana	uncle	stepbrother	love	bike riding	
Me	grandma	grandpop	mouse	nephew	

Crystal's list

Mom	dog	jobs	shop
Dad	bird	school	ice cream shop
Daughter	love	food	fun
Son	house	TV	nephew
Thankful	apartment	games	

Animals	People	Activities	Family Places	Miscellaneous
Dog	mom	games	jobs	food
Bird	dad	shopping	houses	love
Cat	son	biking	apartment	thanks
Iguana	daughter	fun	school	
Fish	grandparents	ice cream shop		
Turtle	stepparents			
Mouse	stepsiblings			

Students use a variety of processing skills: activating prior knowledge, identifying, listing, interpreting, categorizing, generalizing, applying, and labeling. We need to teach the kids to have file folders by teaching them to connect individual words to a broad, encompassing concepts.

