



STAR

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN READING

**VOCABULARY
INSTRUCTION**

Vocabulary

“The number and kinds of word meanings known.”

Vocabulary Affects:

- ★ Comprehension (Vocab is best single indicator of comprehension)
- ★ Alphabetics
- ★ Fluency

Our Students' Vocabulary Exposure

- ★ Vocabulary size doubles between 6th and 12th grade.
- ★ Delays in reading development lead to delays in vocabulary growth.
- ★ Most of our students left school when they would have acquired vocabulary necessary for complex texts.

Fundamentals of Effective Instruction

1. Active student engagement.
2. Numerous practice activities.
3. Time for students to reflect on the usefulness of what they are learning.
4. A way to monitor the effectiveness of the instruction.
5. Motivation to persist based on instruction and feedback.

Vocabulary Instruction Group Placement

- ★ All students (and only students) with intermediate-level vocabulary as an instructional priority are in the vocabulary instruction group.
- ★ Levels 4–8 are in the vocabulary group.
- ★ Other students: give work to do on their instructional priorities.

Student's Instructional Level

- ★ Word Meaning Test results
- ★ Grade level just above highest level at which 75%-80% of the meanings are known

Word Tiers

- ★ Tier 1 - Basic Words
- ★ Tier 2 - Used across academic language
- ★ Tier 3 - Use in specific content areas

Focus on Academic (Tier 2) Words

Academic Word List

- ★ Targets vocab from academic texts.
- ★ Occur less often in newspapers and fiction.
- ★ Connect concepts represented by Tier 3 words.

Tier 2 or Tier 3 Words?

The atmosphere is an ocean of air and a precious natural resource for sustaining life on the earth. Unfortunately human activities based on national/personal interests are causing harm to this common resource, notably by depleting the fragile ozone layer, which acts as a protective shield for life on the Earth.

Tier 2 or Tier 3 Words?

The **atmosphere** is an ocean of air and a **precious natural resource** for **sustaining** life on the earth. **Unfortunately** human **activities** based on national/personal interests are causing harm to this **common** resource, **notably** by **depleting** the **fragile ozone layer**, which acts as a protective **shield** for life on the Earth.

Focus on Academic (Tier 2) Words

- ★ Tier 2 words (like “**challenge**”) are words that cut across many domains.
- ★ You can have a **challenge** in history, in science, in cooking, or in sports.

Depth of Vocabulary: 4 Stages of Word Meaning

Stage 1: Never heard it before.

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

Stage 3: Heard it...it has something to do with...

Stage 4: Know it well.

Vocabulary Knowledge Rating Scale

Vocabulary Word	I've never heard this word before	I've heard this word, but I don't know what it means	I know this word... it has something to do with...	I know the meaning of this word
capability			✓	
content				✓
duplicate				✓
immense		✓		
industrious	✓			

Vocabulary Knowledge Rating Scale

- ★ Before introducing new vocabulary words, ask students to rate their knowledge of the meanings of those words.

Vocabulary Knowledge Rating Scale

- ★ After the words have been introduced, ask students to check their ratings. Were they accurate? Would they change any of their ratings? Why?
- ★ Once students have had multiple encounters with the words, ask them to rate the words again. Do these ratings differ from their initial ones?

Evidence Based Vocab Strategies

Give multiple opportunities for students to use word meanings in a variety of contexts using evidence-based techniques.

Vocabulary Quadrant Chart

- ★ A sheet of paper is divided into four sections.
- ★ The vocabulary word is written in the upper left quadrant.
- ★ The definition provided by the teacher is written in the upper right quadrant.

Vocabulary Quadrant Chart

- ★ Through discussion of the meaning, learners provide examples of contexts in which the word fits and these are recorded in the lower left quadrant.
- ★ Finally, when applicable, antonyms are discussed and recorded in the lower right quadrant.

Vocabulary Quadrant Chart

<p>Vocabulary Word</p> <p>rehearse</p>	<p>Meaning</p> <p>practice prepare go over</p>
<p>Examples</p> <p>wedding graduation ceremony a play music</p>	<p>Opposites</p> <p>“wing it” ad lib improvise</p>

Vocabulary Quadrant Chart

- ★ Provide partially completed quadrant charts for lower-level vocabulary students.
- ★ Fill in the word and the meaning, and students could add their own examples and opposites.

Direct and Explicit Teaching Methods

Include gradual release of responsibility through:

- ★ Explanation
- ★ Modeling
- ★ Guided practice
- ★ Application

Direct and Explicit Instruction

- ★ Explain meaning of word
- ★ Model using words in contexts students will understand
- ★ Provide prompt to help students connect to word
- ★ Provide opportunities for students to have multiple encounters with words in variety of rich contexts

Evidence Based Vocab Strategies

- ★ Introducing new words using the 3-step process.
- ★ Sentence completions.
- ★ Fill in the blank (with sentences and with paragraphs).

Introduce words using the 3-step Process

1. Tell the meaning of the word in terms the students can understand.
2. Model use of the word in relatable contexts.
3. Provide an open-ended prompt for students to answer so that they use the word in a context that relates to them.

Example of 3-step Process

1. “A challenge is something that calls for extra effort.”
2. “A challenge I have is getting to work on time because I have three kids to get up and get ready and off to school before I can leave.”
3. “What is something that is a challenge for you? Why?”

Sentence Completions

Sentence completions allow students to practice with new words by bringing their own contexts to the words.

Sentence Completions

- ★ Teacher gives an open-ended sentence and students finish it.
- ★ Prompt contains vocabulary word, but leaves sentence ending open.
- ★ Beginning of sentence is generic enough so that student can use own context to supply ending.

Sentence Completions

- ★ Write prompts in the first person, so students can connect context to own experiences.
- ★ Prompts should be related to topics or experiences familiar to students.
- ★ Students respond in writing, then share and discuss responses.

Sentence Completions

Examples:

I'm at my most industrious when _____.

One success I would like to duplicate is _____.

Fill in the Blank

Fill-in-the-blank activities give students a chance to work with their new vocabulary words in different contexts provided by the teacher.

Fill in the Blank

- ★ The teacher gives students sentences with blanks that can be filled in with their vocabulary words.
- ★ To challenge students, you can mix in words from previous lessons for review.

Fill in the Blank

- ★ You can also include sentences with more than one vocabulary word, or whole paragraphs that use multiple vocabulary words.
- ★ Students should share their answers in a classroom discussion following the written activity.

Fill in the Blank

To save planning time, look for vocabulary workbooks that feature Tier 2 words and have fill-in-the-blank activities included.

Fill in the Blank

Example:

Bill set up an _____ study schedule because he wanted to get his high school equivalency by the end of the year.

Fill in the Blank

More Examples:

After Carol's sister bought a new car, Carol was no longer _____ with her own car.

_____ workers usually aren't _____ to do the minimum amount of work to get by.

Fill in the Blank

Paragraph Example:

John wasn't _____. He believed he had the _____ to become even better. His new goal was to _____ his success. He knew it would take an _____ amount of practice and hard work, but he was _____.

Who Needs to Know This Word?

- ★ Choose a word and ask students, “Who needs to know this word?”
- ★ Students respond with a person who would need to know the word for work or everyday use, and explain why
- ★ Important to make sure students include the reason why the person needs to know the word.

Who Needs to Know This Word?

This activity takes very little prep time for the teacher, and is very engaging for the class.

Who Needs to Know This Word?

Example: *“Who needs to know the word ‘capability’?”*

- *“My boss needs to know the capabilities of her workers so she can put them in the right jobs.”*
- *“A teacher needs to know the capabilities of her students so she can give them work at the right level for them.”*
- *“A coach needs to know the capability of each player to build a strong team.”*

Read and Respond

- ★ Can extend discussion of word meanings.
- ★ More difficult activity where students are challenged to apply what they know about word meanings.

Read and Respond

- ★ Students read short, informational passage that does not need to contain the vocabulary words.
- ★ Passages should be at a level that is understandable for all students in the class.

Read and Respond

- ★ Teacher gives students questions about passage.
- ★ Questions contain the vocabulary words.
- ★ Students demonstrate knowledge of word meanings by answering the questions.

Read and Respond

- ★ Using different forms of the words in some questions reinforces idea that word meaning stays the same when word form changes.
- ★ Challenge students by including words from previous lessons in read-and-respond questions for review.
- ★ Have students share answers to questions in a discussion following written activity.

Read and Respond

Example

After reading a paragraph on the Underground Railroad the teacher might ask these questions:

- Why would people take the **immense** risk of helping slaves to escape?
- Why do you think Harriet Tubman wasn't **content** to live as a free person, but continued to risk her life helping other runaways?

(The vocabulary words are in the questions, but not necessarily in the passage.)

Yes/No/Why?

Yes/No/Why activities challenge students to examine the relationships between two words.

Yes/No/Why?

- ★ Each Yes/No/Why prompt contains two vocabulary words.
- ★ Yes/No/Why prompts should have no single correct answer.
- ★ Students demonstrate their knowledge of word meanings in their rationale for their answers.

Yes/No/Why?

- ★ Students are challenged to think about word meanings and how they relate, given the context of the prompt question.
- ★ Students can answer yes or no, but have to give reason for their answer – the why.
- ★ Recycle words from past lessons when writing Yes/No/Why prompts to provide review.
- ★ Have students discuss and defend their answers following the written activity.

Yes/No/Why?

Example:

Are industrious people ever content with the results of their efforts? Yes or No, and Why?

Let's Practice (Jigsaw)

- ★ With a partner, practice your assigned strategy.
- ★ Each group will report back to the group.

What Are Your Thoughts?

- ★ How can you see these activities in your own classroom?
- ★ What would they look like on a weekly basis/how would they fit into the schedule?
- ★ How difficult would planning be?

Use Activities That Promote Awareness of Word Meaning Outside of Class

- ★ Ask students to report word sightings or use of the words outside of class.
- ★ Post words so teacher and students can use them throughout the day.

Monitor Progress

- ★ Provide some sort of quiz on the word meanings.
- ★ Ask students to report on use of words outside of class.
- ★ Listen for use of words in class.

Organize a Classroom Routine

- ★ Explain why learning new vocabulary is important.
- ★ Model using new words in familiar contexts.
- ★ Guide students in understanding and application through discussion activities.
- ★ Provide independent opportunities to use what was learned.

Organize a Classroom Routine

- ★ Activities stay relatively the same, while words change.
- ★ Students and teachers both become comfortable with routine and activities.
- ★ Lesson planning becomes easier.

Keep in Mind

- ★ The EBRI strategies for vocabulary are very different from a more traditional approach to teaching words and their meanings.
- ★ Academic vocabulary is a must for students to move beyond the intermediate level reader status.

To Recap:

- ★ Use direct and explicit instruction.
- ★ Select Tier 2 words.
- ★ Introduce word meanings and lead discussions.
- ★ Let students encounter words in multiple contexts.

To Recap:

- ★ Provide multiple meanings to actively process meanings.
- ★ Recycle words week to week.
- ★ Encourage students to track “word sightings” outside of class.
- ★ Monitor progress.

Your Thoughts?

- ★ Do you see yourself using these strategies in your classroom?
- ★ How would your students do?
- ★ What strategies do you think they would like most?

Suggested Resources

- ★ Tier 2 Vocabulary Units
<https://alrc.thecenterweb.org/our-programs/reading/classroom-resources/>
- ★ [Academic Word List](#)

Professional Articles and Books

- ★ [The Role of Vocabulary Instruction in Adult Basic Education](#)
- ★ [Teaching Vocabulary to Adolescents to Improve Comprehension](#)
- ★ [McCutchen Morphological Knowledge Test](#)
- ★ [Morphological awareness in older students](#)
- ★ [Bringing Words to Life](#)