



## Support: Direct and Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ introducing a unit or new text where vocabulary support is anticipated</li> <li>→ as needed for knowledge building within the content area</li> <li>→ morphological understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ only after students actively build knowledge of the mathematical concepts associated with the term(s), and only if they need further support and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ only after students actively build knowledge of the scientific concepts associated with the term(s) and only if they need further development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ introducing a new unit or text where vocabulary support is anticipated</li> <li>→ as needed for vocabulary building within the content area</li> </ul>

### Who could this support?

Students who may need more support in understanding and retaining content area vocabulary. This is especially helpful for ELs (English Learners).

### Purpose:

- to develop an understanding and application of content area vocabulary
  - Students need to not only understand the meaning of the vocabulary they encounter, but also possess the ability to apply the meaning of the vocabulary as they write about it and discuss it in academic conversations.
- to develop reading comprehension proficiency

### Communicating the purpose:

It is very important to communicate the purpose of the strategy with the students so that they know what they are doing and why. This helps with motivation and buy-in for the lesson and topic.

## Process

### Prework

- Preview the selected units for terms that you anticipate students will struggle with, as well as terms that are essential for student understanding of that unit. It is also necessary to pre-read selected text(s) for the unit to determine essential vocabulary. Prioritize the words by their importance to understanding the content, and only pick the words that are essential to understanding that lesson or content.

\*Note: There are different tiers of vocabulary for the subject areas.



## Process (continued)

### Prewrite cont.

- Tier II vocabulary is defined as “...high-frequency words for mature language users — *coincidence, absurd, industrious* — and thus instruction in these words can add productively to an individual's language ability” (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan), and these words can be pre-taught for any content area at any point. Understanding Tier II vocabulary is essential to engaging in reading, writing, and discussing within the content areas.
- Tier III vocabulary “includes words whose frequency of use is quite low, often being limited to specific domains — *isotope, lathe, peninsula* — and probably best learned when needed in a content area” (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan). Be sure to follow the guidelines if you are teaching from an exploratory curriculum (Science and Math) by not front-loading Tier III vocabulary. It is important for students to experience the words through the lessons, and then direct and explicit instruction can follow if students are still needing more support with attaching specific vocabulary to ideas constructed through their active sense-making and meaning-making.
- Reference this [list of common Tier II and Tier III words](#) for additional support.

### Step 1

Communicate the purpose of the support (Direct and Explicit Vocabulary Instruction) to the students.

### Step 2

Have students listen as the teacher says the target word and discusses its structure. (i.e. part of speech, affixes, and origin.)

### Step 3

Have students repeat or echo the word.

### Step 4

Explain the word's meaning using everyday language. **Pictures should be incorporated whenever possible.**

### Step 5

Provide an example, then have students provide an example of the word. The example can be using it in a sentence or a real-life example of the word. Pictures can be included here as well as needed for students with disabilities or English Language Learners. This is also a great time to display how it is used in the text.

### Step 6

See, Say, Write: Write the word, then have students say and write the word. Discuss the word's structure and part of speech. The structure of a word consists of a root and any affixes (prefixes and suffixes). Discuss with students the different parts of the words and how they combine to create the overall meaning of the word. Part of speech refers to whether it is a noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, or interjection. Discuss what part of speech the word is and how that supports meaning in the word as well. Ex: A noun is a person, place or thing. An adverb is a word or phrase that describes an adjective, verb or other adverb. (This step helps students understand other words that are not a part of their vocabulary because they can apply their meaning making from parts of speech and word parts to other words.)

\*Note: As students encounter the words within the text or curriculum, ask them to apply the meaning and think back on the picture and/or examples that they heard or came up with. Also point out to students that sometimes they may be able to use context clues to help support the meaning of words they don't know as well.



## Process (continued)

**I know I'm successful when...**

- You will be successful when you see students are more comfortable not only reading the selected vocabulary terms but are also demonstrating understanding of the terms through their writing and speaking.

## Additional Considerations

- The more connections made to the word, the more likely students are to retain the meaning of the word. As needed, consider additional questions, reasons, examples, non-examples, and situations with students using the vocabulary word.
- As students are learning English as a second language, they are progressing through the continuum of learning the language. Students in the initial stages may require more practice in speaking and listening before progressing to the print (reading and writing) components. Additional activities for these students could be a small group with the teachers where they practice saying the word, definition or sentences with the words, or as a partner activity.

## References

Beck, Isabel, et al. "Choosing Words to Teach." *Reading Rockets*, WETA, 15 Oct. 2020, <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/choosing-words-teach>.

"Tier 2 and Tier 3 Vocabulary Terms – Common Core State Standards." *Wagner High*, NYC Department of Education, [https://www.wagnerhigh.net/pdf/Tier\\_2%20AND%20Tier%203\\_Common%20Core\\_Volcabulary\\_Terms.pdf](https://www.wagnerhigh.net/pdf/Tier_2%20AND%20Tier%203_Common%20Core_Volcabulary_Terms.pdf).

"Topic 2 : Intentional On-Purpose Instruction: Explicit Vocabulary Routines." *AIM Pathways*, Academy in Manayunk, 2022, <https://aimpathwaysonline.org/lms/course/55/item/4656>.