

# Teaching vocabulary: principles for reading success

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## ? What is vocabulary?

- Knowledge of words' meanings
  - Breadth: Knowing a lot of words
  - Depth: Understanding the complexity of words

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## ? Vocabulary breadth

- What are synonyms for excellent?
 

synonyms: admirable, awesome, brilliant, capital, eminent, exceptional, fantastic, fine, first-rate, great, magnificent, marvelous, of high quality, outstanding, splendid, super, superb, superior, swell, terrific, top-notch, tremendous, very good, wonderful

near synonyms: a beaut, cool, first-class, magic, matchless, mind-blowing, of the highest quality, of the highest standard, out of this world, peerless, perfect, preeminent, sterling, sublime, superlative, supreme

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## ? Vocabulary breadth

- What are synonyms for excellent?
 

informal synonyms and near synonyms: A1, awesomesauce, brill, fab, on fleek, ripping, smashing, spiffing, supercalifragilisticexpialidocious, tip-top, wicked

Australian words (maybe?): a beauty?, a peach?, a ripper?, bonza?, brilliant, grouse? (Victoria?), slap-up?, snifter?

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## ? Vocabulary depth

- What does *principal* mean?
  1. Noun: A school leader (in the U.S.)
  2. Noun: Original amount of a debt
  3. Adjective: Most important
  4. Noun: Lead person (of a company or dance group)

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**Vocabulary & Reading Comprehension**

- Is vocabulary knowledge related to reading comprehension?
  - Yes
  - It is one of the strongest predictors of reading comprehension performance.

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**Why is Word Knowledge Important?**

Understanding vocabulary words helps students make sense of related text.

Many students do not have necessary vocabulary knowledge.

We provide this knowledge prior to reading text to enhance comprehension.



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**Example of the problem**

- Understanding *hegemony*
- "It is claimed that each foreign policy strategy is linked to a **hegemonic** project and that a crisis in political **hegemony** in most cases will also imply a change in foreign policy strategies."

A historical metatextual analysis of Tudor foreign policy, class, class, and hegemony/Tudor foreign policy, class, class, and hegemony. (url) = The Free Library. (2014). Retrieved Jan 27 2019 from https://www.thefreedictionary.com/A+historical+metatextual+analysis+of+Tudor+foreign+policy+class+class+and+hegemony+url

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**What do you do?**

- Choose good words to teach
- Teach them effectively


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**What to Teach**

*Words They Don't Know*

Words that are **useful for comprehending the given text**

<p><b>Generally-useful academic words</b></p> <p>scrutinize    selection</p> <p>element    occasional</p> <p>gradual</p>	<p><b>THE LOTTERY</b></p>  <p>SHIRLEY JACKSON</p>	<p><b>Content-specific useful words</b></p> <p>inhabitant    constituent</p> <p>precipitation    paraphernalia</p>
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**Choosing Which Unknown Words to Teach**

<p>Some words are not useful enough</p> <p>You could skip them and meaning isn't affected at all</p>	<p>For violating the laws of segregation, referred to as the "Jim Crow laws" (which were meant to keep white people and black people separate), Rosa was arrested and fine. Her refusal to move was a quiet and simple action, but she took an enormous risk that evening. She also became a hero and an inspiration to people all over the nation who were fighting for racial equality, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a young minister who would soon become a major civil rights leader. In response to Rosa's arrest, blacks in the city of Montgomery boycotted the public bus system for more than a year.</p>
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Her refusal to move was a quiet and simple action, but she took an **enormous** risk that evening.

**Her refusal to move was a quiet and simple action, but she took a risk that evening.**

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## What to Teach

Teaching Words Two Ways

Fast		Focus	
<b>Which words?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less essential to text</li> <li>Have simple definitions</li> <li>Easily imageable</li> </ul>	<b>How should I teach?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short definition</li> <li>Image (sometimes)</li> <li>Explicit link to text</li> </ul>	<b>Which words?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Important for understanding</li> <li>Have complex definitions</li> <li>Are hard to explain</li> </ul>	<b>How should I teach?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short definition</li> <li>Image (sometimes)</li> <li>Explicit link to text</li> <li>Examples</li> <li>Non-examples (sometimes)</li> <li>Questions to check understanding</li> </ul>

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## Which words are which?

vulnerable

formations

flourish

runoff

interference

**Which words are which?**

**Fast**

- Less essential to text
- Easily imageable

**Focus**

- Important for understanding
- Have complex definitions
- Are hard to explain

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## How to Teach Fast Words

Short Definition

**Fast**

- short definition
- image (sometimes)
- explicit link to text

**boycotted**

**A Short Definition should...**

- only include the definition applicable to the text
- include synonyms, if possible
- link to the current text
- not be distorted, but maybe incomplete

1. Withdraw from commercial or social relations with (a country, organization, or person) as a punishment or protest.

2. To engage in a concerted refusal to have dealings with (a person, a store, an organization, etc.) usually to express disapproval or to force acceptance of certain conditions

boycotted = refused to do

match tense, person, or number

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## Teaching Fast Words

Short Definition (usually)

- synonyms if possible
- linked to the current text
- not distorted but maybe incomplete

**formations**

a structure or arrangement of something

2. something that is formed or created

3. an orderly arrangement or group of people, ships, or airplanes

formations = structures

match tense, person, or number

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## Teaching Fast Words

Images (often)

- exactly shows what the word means
- does NOT

**formations**

Command-Shift-3 ... full screen

Command-Shift-4 ... selectable

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## Teaching Fast Words

Link to text

As we read, imagine all the coral structures, the coral ...

**formations**

Right. These beautiful formations are the base for all of the reef's biodiversity

[pause, pointing at word]

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## Teaching Focus Words

Same as Fast Words

- Short definition
- Image (sometimes)
- Explicit link to text

**Focus**

- short definition
- image (sometimes)
- explicit link to text
- examples
- non-examples (sometimes)
- questions to check for understanding

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## Teaching Focus Words

Examples & Non-Examples

*Adult example: ambivalent*

- Examples (good instances of the word's use)
  - "If you had to choose between walking 3 miles to work and driving an hour, you might be ambivalent because it's hard to choose"
  - "In the text, Americans felt ambivalent about participation in World War II because they wanted to defeat the Axis but felt frightened about possible casualties."
- Non-examples (to clarify subtleties)
  - "If someone does not care who wins the election and does not vote, that person is not ambivalent. An ambivalent person cares who wins but is torn between the two sides."

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## Teaching Focus Words

interference

Examples

when you do something that messes something up

If you are being too loud with your friends, your parents might interfere. There would be some parental ...

[pause, pointing at word]

interference

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## Teaching Focus Words

interference

Examples

One concern about the reef is human

[pause, pointing at word]

interference

Right. Human interference could cause damage to the reef. People could interfere by crashing boats into it or stealing coral formations

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## Teaching Focus Words

interference

Non-Examples

If you are doing homework and your baby sister is crying, that's not interference

It's not interference because it probably wouldn't stop you from doing homework. It's annoying, but it's not interference. Turn to your associate: Explain what that is not interference.

[students discuss in pairs]

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## Teaching Focus Words: Group Practice

Ask questions that encourage thinking (Kanevski, 2006):

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?  
 What would it be?  
 Maria thought her car was **fabulous** because...  
 The family had a **fabulous** time at the park.  
 How could a family have a **fabulous** time?  
 When have you had a **fabulous** time?  
 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**?

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**Teaching Focus Words** interference

questions to check understanding

If [ example ], is that [ word ]?

If two of your friends start arguing and you separate them and tell them to calm down, is that interference?

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**Teaching Focus Words** interference

Questions to check for understanding

[ real world example ], is that [ word ]?

Some companies have been dumping sand in spaces in the reef. Are they interfering with the reef? Is this human interference?

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**Teaching Focus Words** interference

Questions with follow-up with student involvement

Some companies have been dumping sand in spaces in the reef. Are they interfering with the reef? Is this human interference?

Think. Is that human interference? Wait for my signal.

[Pause. Put out hands for response.]

We agree it is. Talk with your associate. Why is that an example of interference? Yes

[Students discuss in pairs.]

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**How to Teach: Student Engagement**

It is important to keep students engaged when you're explaining things.

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**Quick Practice Techniques**

- Partners first: Produces higher quality answers and allows cold calling
- Wait time before asking: Teachers often give less than a second; 3-5 seconds helps a lot
- Whip around/Pass

**Partners First:** With your partner, come up with examples of antiquated devices people might still own. I'll cold call on students:

- S1: A dial telephone
- S2: [ ]
- S3: [ ]

**Wait Time:** Look at the vocabulary words on the board. I'll say a sentence and you give me the associated vocabulary word.

- You've got 1,000 spoons when all you need is a knife. [pause]
- She sat on the dock, looking out over the ocean, head down and shoulders slumped. [pause]

**Whip Around/Pass** Think of the words we've learned to describe the different characters in *The Hunger Games*. I'll say a character, and you'll say a describing word.

- Katniss ... valorous
- Pastor ... enamored
- President Snow ... duplicitous

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**Yes, No, Maybe**

Sentence	Plundering?
Borrowing a shirt from your sister	Maybe
When an army invades a village and takes all their treasures	Yes
Taking your shirt out of lost and found	No

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### Which Word Fits

- Students are asked a question and then given two choices from a vocabulary list.
- After deciding which word fits the question, students hold up the word card

The protesters wanted the march against the new law to be peaceful and...

nonviolent  
compassionate

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### An example of focus word instruction

*pe* always travelling from place to place

- A circus company is peripatetic because they are always moving from place to place.
- You might feel peripatetic for a day if you were running lots of errands and had to visit lots of different stores.

In today's text, the author describes rich New Yorkers as "supping" in a peripatetic way. They would meet at one person's apartment, eat there, and travel to other apartments, eating a bit at each one.

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### An example of focus word instruction

- Questions:
  - A person who is lost in the desert will wander around looking for water and shelter. Is this person peripatetic? Why or why not?
  - Which person is peripatetic: A person who travels from New York to Paris for a month-long visit or a person who spends a month visiting different presidential homes in the U.S.? Why?
  - Besides a circus performers, what other people have jobs that require them to be peripatetic?

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### Analyze Word Knowledge Video

		Word Knowledge	
		Fast Words	Focus Words
What to Teach	<input type="checkbox"/> Less essential to text	<input type="checkbox"/> Simple definitions	<input type="checkbox"/> Important for understanding
	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy to remember	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy to explain	<input type="checkbox"/> Hard to explain
How to Teach	<input type="checkbox"/> Short definition	<input type="checkbox"/> Short definition	<input type="checkbox"/> Long (sometimes)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Long (sometimes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Explicit link to text	<input type="checkbox"/> Examples (sometimes)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Questions to check for understanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-examples (sometimes)
Student Engagement:			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Be snappy, not fancy	<input type="checkbox"/> Get students talking

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### Learn from an Expert

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### Preparing to teach focus words


- Choose a limited number of words
  - Mischief
- Create a simple definition
  - Trouble
- Give an example
  - "If your dad tells you not to play in the basement, and you do it anyway, that is mischief."
- Give a non-example
  - "If your mom tells you to walk straight home from school without stopping, and you do, it's not mischief"
- Create practice questions
  - "If I sneak a cookie from the kitchen when my parents told me not to, is that mischief?"

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 **Check for Understanding: 3B**

1. When choosing vocabulary words for a given text, it is important to choose:
  - a) Generally useful academic words
  - b) Content specific useful words
  - c) Both A and B
2. True or False: "Fast" words are words that can be easily explained using short definitions and an image.
3. For both Fast and Focus words, it is important to:
  - a) List a few definitions for each word, even if not applicable to the text, so that students get an overall understanding of the word
  - b) Find several images to illustrate the word, even if the images show approximate definitions
  - c) Explicitly link the words to the text
  - d) Ask students if they know what the word means before giving them the definition

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