

Vocabulary is ...

...the knowledge of words and word meanings in both oral and print language and in productive and receptive forms. Vocabulary instruction is teaching words and their extended meanings systematically while providing multiple opportunities to practice key vocabulary and engage in oral language.

Skills to develop:

Kindergarten

- Use new vocabulary on different occasions.
- Apply vocabulary knowledge when listening in order to understand read alouds.
- Understand multiple words in different contexts.
- Understand simple relationships between words (e.g., opposite words).
- Sort pictures of basic concepts into basic categories.
- Use affixes (e.g., *-s*, *-ing*) to learn word meaning.

First Grade

- Use new vocabulary in speaking and writing.
- Understand words in different contexts.
- Understand different relationships between words, such as synonyms and antonyms.
- Apply vocabulary knowledge while reading to comprehend text.
- Use affixes (e.g., *-s*, *-ing*, *-ed*) to learn word meaning.

Second Grade

- Use new vocabulary in spoken and written language.
- Make inferences about the meaning of a word based on its use in a sentence.
- Use affixes (e.g., *-s*, *-ly*, *-ed*, *-ing*, *-tion*, *pre-*, *un-*) to learn word meaning.
- Identify simple multiple-meaning words.
- Apply vocabulary knowledge while reading to understand text.
- Understand relationships between words (antonyms, synonyms, related concepts).

Third Grade

- Use newly learned vocabulary in spoken and written language.
- Make inferences about the meaning of a word based on its use in a sentence.
- Use affixes (e.g., *-ly*, *-ful*, *-tion*, *-ness*, *pre-*, *un-*, etc.) to learn word meaning.
- Identify multiple-meaning words.
- Apply vocabulary knowledge while reading to understand text.
- Understand relationships between words (antonyms, synonyms, related concepts).
- Use dictionary, thesaurus, and Internet to determine word meaning.

Effective strategies and grouping formats

Whole Group and Teacher-led Small Group

Direct instruction: Educator teaches word meanings directly through explicit and systematic instruction, graphic organizers, think alouds, the use of nonverbal clues, and deep-processing activities.

Multiple opportunities for practice: Students encounter words multiple times and are encouraged to use new words as often as possible.

Instruction connected to text: Vocabulary instruction is not done in isolation. Words meanings are connected to text by teaching and explaining important concepts before reading a story.

Discussions about texts and words: Students are engaged in discussions about new words they read in texts.

Selecting appropriate words to be taught: Educator teaches words that will likely appear in many contexts, that are from actual learning materials, and that have multiple meanings.

Centers/Work Stations (Mixed-ability Groups)

- Exploring visual representations of words such pictures, Internet slide shows, and video.
- Using dictionaries and other resources strategically.
- Vocabulary games such matching synonyms and antonyms.
- Creating vocabulary cartoons.
- Word hunts to find vocabulary words in text.
- Word-building cards with affixes.
- Recording new or interesting words during independent reading.
- Comparing related words on a continuum of degrees (e.g., comparing the words *hot*, *warm*, *frozen*, *cool*, and *cold* and placing them on a continuum from warmest to coldest).