



# READING LESSONS: Embedded Vocabulary Instruction

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Go over and over and over the same words **12 TIMES** in different modalities students – speaking, listening, reading, writing, and acting.

1. THINK ALOUD about how YOU learn new words.
2. READ ALOUD: Student has copy of the book as she reads along with an audiobook or as the teacher reads aloud.
3. SHARED READING
  - Involves several readings of a number of short selections
  - Focuses students' attention on words
  - Deliberately stretches students' thinking and scaffolds their efforts
  - Employs carefully selected books

Seven key practices teachers can integrate into their shared book-reading process  
Problem-Solving Struggling Readers," The Reading Teacher, March 2000

- Use informational texts and storybooks to boost comprehension through frequent exposure to words, connected concepts, and prior knowledge
- Repeatedly read stories, allowing children to ask more questions and talk more about book-related content as they listen to a book multiple times
- Explicitly teach high-utility vocabulary words prior to reading the book and/or during the book-reading process to expose children to words that are important for later learning and text reading
- Engage in "before" and "after" shared reading conversations with brief in-context definitions, so that new content can be taught in the context of the book
- Provide multiple exposures to vocabulary and connected concepts, enabling children to learn words incrementally so that information accumulates over time
- Engage in higher-level discussions requiring children to use complex thinking skills (explaining, summarizing, associating, connecting, synthesizing, analyzing) to help children make connections between words and factual knowledge
- Prime background knowledge, prompting children to draw on personal experience to better understand new knowledge, increase comprehension, and expand world knowledge

By applying these practices, teachers can push children's conversational abilities beyond what they can independently accomplish and in the process expand their knowledge about words and the world.

4. **BUILD BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE.** Plan experiences, take picture walks, view movie clips, show concrete objects or photos, build text sets, interpret cartoons, tell jokes, etc.
5. **REREAD** the same text. First time – overall story or idea. Second time- details. Third time – deep comprehension.
6. **VISUALIZE** words by talking about mental pictures, drawing words, mapping words, and using graphic organizers.
7. **BUILD TEXT SETS.** Students begin by reading on a topic in an easy read. Choose another text to read next on the same topic. Keep increasing the difficulty of the texts because students are learning vocabulary in each one that they can apply to the next. That’s why reading in a series of texts is powerful, too.
8. **ACT OUT** words. Select a passage from literature that the children are reading. Draw passages. Ask questions about the vocabulary to help discover meanings.

Here’s a passage from page 17 of *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt. Go through the passage and ask the children to analyze why the author used one word and not another. For example, ask, what does it mean to be jaunty? What does it mean to pause at the gate? What would you look like if you were intent on catching fireflies? Act out the verbs.

*At sunset of that same day, a stranger came strolling up the road from the village and paused at the Fosters’ gate. Winnie was once again in the yard, this time intent on catching fireflies, and at first she didn’t notice him. But after a few moments of watching her, he called out, “Good evening!”*

*He was remarkably tall and narrow, this stranger standing there. His long chin faded off into a thin, apologetic beard, but his suit was a jaunty yellow that seemed to glow a little in the fading light. A black hat dangled from one hand, and as Winnie came toward him, he passed the other through his dry, gray hair, settling it smoothly. “Well now,” he said in a light voice. “Out for fireflies, are you?”*

9. **LATIN-GREEK CONNECTION:** It’s just more efficient to teach multiple words that are related to one another. “Building Vocabulary Through Morphological Study” *The Reading Teacher* Vol. 65 Issue, © 2011 International Reading Association

Until recently, teaching Latin and Greek word roots occurred only in upper-grade or content-area classrooms. But a growing body of research tells us that this strategy should be introduced in the primary grades (Mountain, 2005; Rasinski, Padak, Newton, & Newton, 2011).

Roots have two features that make them easy to teach: They represent simple, familiar concepts, and their meaning is stable—for instance, port means “to carry” and graph means “to write.” Once students understand the linguistic principle that words with the same roots are related in meaning, they can use words they know to unlock the meaning of new words.



For example, if students know that the base trac- means "pull, draw, or drag," they can connect words they already know (like tractor) with words they may not know (like extraction) (Rasinski, Padak, Newton, & Newton, 2008). One of the most commonly encountered roots in the English language is the Latin base mov- /mot-, which means "to move." Even the youngest learners know words like motor, motorcycle, or move. When they meet cognate academic words like promotion or motivate, students can apply the concept of movement to figure out the new words. Teaching the meaning of prefixes is especially helpful because a few prefixes are used in a large number of words. When the prefix re- appears in return, replace, and refund, for example, it always means "back."

Affixes to teach to our youngest children

**Prefixes**  
 co-, con – with, together  
 de- own, off of  
 ex- out  
 in- not  
 pre- before  
 re- back, again  
 sub- under, below  
 un- not

**Bases**  
 audi- hear, listen  
 graph- write, draw  
 mov-, mot- move  
 port- carry  
 vid-, vis- see  
 bi- two  
 tri- three

**Suffixes**  
 -able, -ible – can, able to  
 -er – more  
 -est – most  
 -ful – full of  
 -less – without

Adapted from "Getting to the Root of Word Study: Teaching Latin and Greek Word Roots in the Elementary and Middle Grades," by N. Padak, E. Newton, T. Rasinski, & R. Newton

10. ADVANCED VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

Put advanced vocabulary words on 8 x 11" colored poster board and put them in different places on the walls of the classroom (not in any ordered way). Then, in the course of the day, as you are engaged in doing other things, briefly interrupt your activity, walk over to a word, touch it, and give the definition. Repeat this over the course of the week, so that eventually all you'll need to do is touch the word (as a prompt) and the students will be able to give the definitions.

Choose individual vocabulary words such as the word *elegant* students will see in reading tasks (read aloud, shared reading, content area tasks, reading groups) or will use in the daily procedures of the classroom. After giving the meaning, ask students to think of a time in their life when they felt particularly *elegant*. Have the students share their personal experiences while using the word *elegant* in their account.

Use the advanced vocabulary words in your own daily teaching. So, for example, at the beginning of the day, you might want to say something like: "I'm so happy to see you all at the *commencement* of this school day." Then ask the students if they can guess what the word means. Discuss the meaning of the word, and then plan on using the word several times during the day, or at the beginning of each day (that is, *at the commencement*).

11. TEACH STUDENTS IN CONFERENCES OR GROUPS

