

## Vocabulary, Grade K-6

### Introduction

#### Vocabulary, Grades K-6

Good readers recognize that learning new words and ideas can help them better comprehend what they read or what information is given to them orally. Good readers:

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases they encounter by using context clues, analyzing word parts, and checking reference materials.
- Learn new words by relating them to words they already know.
- Understand that words or phrases can be used both literally and figuratively.

In this teaching course, we explain how vocabulary instruction works using Open Court Reading resources and teaching strategies. *Open Court Reading* and *SRA Imagine It!* are designed to provide teachers with all the tools they need to implement effective vocabulary instruction as part of the comprehensive reading program.

In *Open Court Reading* and *SRA Imagine It!*, vocabulary is addressed before, during, and after reading.

#### Before Reading

At the beginning of every day, students work on various elements of reading. In the primary grades, students are learning how to decode words and understand text structure using **Decodables** and blending lines. As students move into the upper grades and encounter more complex and longer words, the understanding of morphology and the morphological units that make up words is important for fluent reading, vocabulary development, and comprehension. Therefore students receive instruction in word structure, or word analysis. This instruction supports the development of vocabulary as students learn how inflectional endings change a word's tense, number, and so on, and how affixes can be added to a base word to create or derive a new but related meaning.

In preparation for reading the selection, the teacher presents vocabulary words from the selection. In Kindergarten and through the first half of Grade 1, the teacher introduces the Selection Vocabulary orally before reading the selection. Definitions and examples are given, and students use the words in sentences. From the middle of Grade 1 through Grade 6, Selection Vocabulary is taught within the context of sentences. Students use skills such as context clues, apposition, and structural analysis to figure out the meaning of the words.

#### During Reading

In the primary grades, suggestions are made throughout the reading to discuss new and interesting words and for which words to clarify. Vocabulary activities found throughout the lesson reinforce and extend vocabulary knowledge. Students in the upper grades monitor their understanding of words and text. When they do not understand something, they stop and clarify what they have read. Students will use context clues, apposition, and structural elements to clarify the meanings of unknown words encountered while reading.

#### After Reading

Students review the vocabulary words that they learned before reading the selection. They also review any interesting words that they identified and discussed during reading. Starting in Grade 2, students record in their *Writer's Notebook* both the selection vocabulary words and the interesting words they identified during their reading. Students are also encouraged to use both sets of words in discussion and writing.

#### Lorelei Echeverri's Class

In this teaching example, Lorelei Echeverri teaches her Kindergarten students as they read “What Happens When Wind Blows.”

### Preparing to read

Ms. Echeverri makes sure her students are ready to read a new selection by engaging them in several pre-reading activities. One of these activities involves browsing the selection by looking at the text and pictures for clues that might help them understand it. By pointing out headers and words in bold, Ms. Echeverri not only teaches students about text structure, but also about academic vocabulary and how students can find words that are important for them to know in the text they are about to read.

### Teaching vocabulary

This part of the teaching example shows a critical step in preparing children to become independent readers and writers: vocabulary building. Because all of Ms. Echeverri’s students are English learners and need maximum support, she uses three techniques to build vocabulary:

Technique	Explanation
<b>Making connections</b>	Students relate words to something they already know or have experienced.
<b>Introducing new vocabulary</b>	The meanings of unfamiliar or new words are taught prior to reading.
<b>Helping children visualize words</b>	Students attach the meanings of words to physical actions or objects.

### Teaching and reinforcing vocabulary knowledge by using comprehension strategies and skills

#### Monitoring and clarifying

In the first reading of the **Big Book** selection, Ms. Echeverri models several strategies used by good readers to get meaning from the text. In this example, she models monitoring and clarifying by helping students define words and understand concepts.

#### Classifying and categorizing

The goal of comprehension skills instruction is to help students become aware of the logic behind the structure of a selection. In the second reading of the **Big Book** selection, Ms. Echeverri uses the classifying and categorizing skill to help students organize information in the selection. By doing so, words that are unknown or words that students might not use when talking about wind are connected to information that students do know to help them gain a deeper understanding of the words.

**Please note:** The lessons in Units 1-6 of Level 1 are similar to the lessons demonstrated in this kindergarten class. Although the content is different, the instructional methods learned in this course can be easily applied to Level 1 lessons.

#### Julie Canzone’s Class

In this teaching example, Julie Canzone teaches her Grade 1 students as they read “The Kite.” First, she ensures that her students are ready to read a new selection by actively engaging them in several pre-reading activities. These activities are designed to help the students activate and use the knowledge they already have, to supply them with the new information they will need, and to familiarize them with the text.

### Preparing to read

To prepare her students for reading, Ms. Canzone guides them through specific discussion topics and activities designed to help them approach the text with confidence. Because these skills and strategies are still new to her students, Ms. Canzone uses modeling techniques to show them how to prepare for reading. Some of the activities involve teaching vocabulary:

- Browse the selection, looking for clues, potential problems or points of confusion, and anything else that interests them or makes them wonder.
- Chart and discuss these clues, problems, and wonderings as they browse the text. These lists will be revisited after the reading.
- Work on strategies for addressing, decoding, and understanding unfamiliar words.

### Kimberly Proby’s Class

In the following teaching examples, Kimberly Proby teaches her Grade 2 students as they read “Monster Tracks.” She makes sure the students are ready to read a new selection by actively engaging them in several pre-reading activities. Although the selection is a challenging expository text, the students are comfortable; they know that support is always available, if they need it.

### Preparing to read

In preparation for reading the text, Ms. Proby guides the students through specific topics of discussion and activities designed to help them approach the text confidently. Some of these activities review academic and domain-specific vocabulary as well as address unknown words:

- Ms. Proby has students discuss what they already know of the subject; in doing so, she helps them activate their prior knowledge. Note that Ms. Proby specifically asks them to compare and contrast “Monster Tracks” with selections they have read earlier. This helps students recognize that their growing knowledge of fossils can serve as background knowledge for understanding this new selection. Eventually, this becomes second nature.
- Focus their browsing of the selection as they look for clues that will show that what they are reading is an expository text, problems that might be confusing, such as difficult words, and things that make them wonder.

All of these activities help the students become engaged readers who know before they begin to read what their purpose is for reading and what they can expect to learn.

### Teaching vocabulary

In this lesson, students decipher the meaning of the selection vocabulary words by using the following skills: word structure (or word analysis) and context.

- **Word Structure:** Ms. Proby reviews the meaning of a prefix in one of the words, and helps students use their knowledge to determine the meaning of a word.
- **Context:** The students look at the words immediately surrounding an unknown word.

Ms. Proby also has students replace the words in the sentence with their definitions to make sure that the sentences make sense. The students also check their understanding of new words by looking them up in the glossary of their *Student Anthology*. In this way, they can see how well the different skills worked in clarifying the unknown words.

Since the new words need to be used by the students in order to become part of their vocabularies, Ms. Proby ends the vocabulary lesson by having the students choose words from the vocabulary list to add to their personal dictionaries in their Writer's Notebook.

**Please note:** The lessons in Units 1-6 of Level 3 are similar to the lessons demonstrated in this Grade 2 class. Although the content is different, the instructional methods learned in this course can be easily applied to Level 3 lessons.

### **Nora Zamora's Class**

In the following teaching example, Nora Zamora teaches her Grade 4 students as they read "The Diary of Anne Frank."

#### **Preparing to read**

Ms. Zamora begins with building background and then having her students relate the selection to the unit theme. Then she helps the students focus their browsing of the selection by having them read the focus questions as well as the first paragraph of the selection. Finally, she has them look for clues that will help them understand it, words or ideas that might be confusing, and things that make them wonder.

#### **Teaching vocabulary**

This part of the teaching example demonstrates how to teach a new selection—teaching vocabulary. Ms. Zamora assures students' success in building vocabulary and reading the selection by helping them understand the different ways in which they can learn new words. For this selection, students use context clues to figure out the meanings of the words.

#### **After reading**

The students revisit their clues, problems, and wonderings chart. In this part of the example, they go over the meanings of difficult words and ideas that they were able to clarify as they were reading.

**Please note:** The lessons in Units 1-6 of Levels 5 and 6 are similar to the lessons demonstrated in this Grade 4 class. Although the content is different, the instructional methods learned in this course can be easily applied to Level 5 and 6 lessons.