

VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

Decades of research have confirmed the important role that vocabulary plays in reading comprehension and in students' overall academic success. Immersing students in rich and varied language experiences permits them to learn words through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The following vocabulary routines and strategies will give students multiple exposures to Key Vocabulary words, which, in turn, will enhance students' social studies comprehension.

Vocabulary Knowledge Rating

Knowledge rating helps a teacher determine how well students know Key Vocabulary words in a chapter. Using discussion, students share what they already know about these terms.

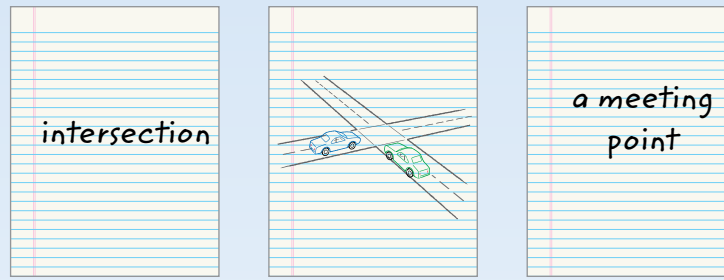
1. Have students write Key Vocabulary words in a **Knowledge Rating chart**.

KEY VOCAB	KNOW IT	NOT SURE	DON'T KNOW	DEFINITION

2. Read the words aloud, one at a time. Ask students to put an X in the appropriate box in the chart showing whether they know it well, have heard or seen it but are unsure of its meaning, or don't know it at all.
3. Divide the class into mixed-ability pairs. Call out the words again, giving students one minute to share with each other their responses on their charts and what they know about the words.
4. Call on pairs to offer definitions of words they think they know. When the class has settled on an adequate definition, have them write it in the "Definition" column. If no students know the meaning of a particular term, direct them to search for the definition as they read the text.
5. As students read the chapter, have them compare their definitions with the way the word is used in the text.
6. Be sure to include these Key Vocabulary words when you test students on their comprehension of the material.

Word Wall

A **Word Wall** presents a visual reminder of Key Vocabulary words throughout a chapter. Reserve a bulletin board to display important words. The words can be shown by themselves or with photos or diagrams that help clarify their meanings.

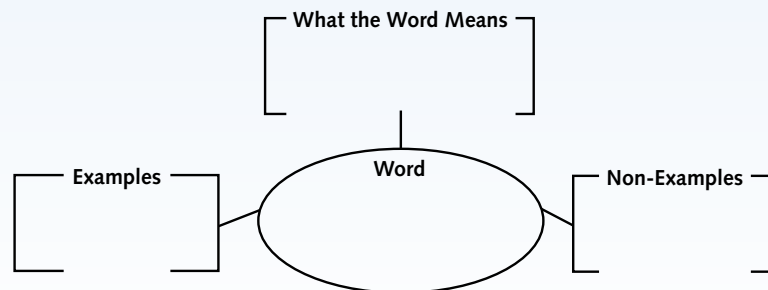


Some teachers create a complete display of all the Key Vocabulary and refer to it throughout the chapter. Other teachers prefer to add words gradually as they come up in reading or class discussion. In either case, do some culminating activities asking students what they learned about each word.

Vocabulary Study Cards

Have students create a **Vocabulary Study Card** for each Key Vocabulary word. They may want to keep their cards in a designated Vocabulary Notebook for quick reference.

1. Demonstrate how to draw a **Word Map**. Then model adding the information to the map by writing the word in the center oval, a student-generated definition in the top box, and an example and a non-example in the left and right boxes.



2. Turn the card over and model how to note additional information about the word's pronunciation, synonyms and antonyms, connotation, word family, and a sample sentence.
3. Suggest that students use these study cards for periodic cumulative review.

VOC Strategy

A **VOC strategy** is a student-centered approach to vocabulary learning. This strategy helps students analyze word meanings from context and use sensory connections that are associated with their particular learning styles. Students approach the word from several angles by following these steps:

1. Write the sentence in which the word appears in the text.
2. Study how the word is used. What do you think it means?
3. Now look up the word in the dictionary or use the glossary.
4. Use the word in a sentence of your own.
5. To help you remember the meaning, draw a picture or a quick sketch that relates to the word; you might think of an action the word suggests or connect the word to a story or a news report.
6. Tell why you chose this way of representing the meaning.

Word Sort

In a **Word Sort**, students explore how words are related by categorizing words into groups.

1. Have students write Key Vocabulary words on separate cards or strips of paper. You can either tell students how to group the cards or allow students to discover patterns and shared attributes on their own.
2. When students have sorted the cards, ask students to explain their sorts. Then have them create a chart or web to record the word relationships they discovered.
3. Finally, encourage students to sort the words again using different categories and to once again record the information in a graphic organizer.

Games

Games motivate students to be word conscious while actively manipulating and using language. Make the following games and part of your vocabulary routines:

1. **Around the World** A student designated as the traveler moves from his or her seat and stands by a student in the next seat. Give the traveler and the challenger a definition; whoever correctly identifies the word first is the traveler and stands by the student in the next seat. A traveler who continues responding first and returns to his or her seat has successfully gone "Around the World."
2. **Stump the Expert** Designate an expert. A stumper presents a definition and the expert has ten seconds to produce the term. If the expert responds accurately, the next stumper offers a challenge. This continues until the expert is stumped or until the expert answers a set number of challenges and earns applause or a prize. The person who stumps the expert becomes the next expert.