Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Words for Everyone Across Grades and Domains

Anita L. Archer, PhD
Author – Consultant – Teacher


www.explicitinstruction.org

Long Term Goal

By the end of high school, college-ready students will need to acquire about 80,000 words. (Hirsh, 2003)

BIG PICTURE - EXAMPLE

Science Class
igneous rock noun

- a rock
- formed when melted rock material cools and hardens

igneous rock example

Basalt is an igneous rock.
Basalt is formed when melted rock material cools and hardens.

igneous rock example

Tuff
Tuff is an igneous rock.
Tuff is formed when __________
Pumice
Pumice is an igneous rock.

Pumice is formed when ____________

Granite
Granite is an igneous rock.

Granite is formed when ____________

Obsidian is formed when melted rock material cools and hardens.

Is obsidian an igneous rock? Why or why not?

Shale is a rock formed under heat and pressure from another kind of rock.

Is shale an igneous rock? Why or why not?
**igneous rock** Word Study

**Word Origin**
Latin

The word "igneous" is derived from the Latin ignis, meaning "of fire".

---

**linear perspective**

- parallel lines
- recede in the distance
- appear to get closer together and converge
- creates illusion of depth and distance

---

BIG PICTURE - EXAMPLE

Art Class

---

linear perspective Example
linear perspective

Example

A Street in Venice by Sargent

Check understanding.
How did the artist use linear perspective to create depth and distance?

IMPORTANCE OF VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION
Vocabulary Gap

Linguistically “poor” first graders knew 5,000 words; linguistically “rich” first graders knew 20,000 words. (Moats, 2001)

Vocabulary Gap

• Gap in word knowledge persists through the elementary years. (White, Graves, & Slater, 1990)

• The vocabulary gap between struggling readers and proficient readers grows each year. (Stanovich, 1986)

Vocabulary Gap

• After the primary grades, the “achievement gap” between socioeconomic groups is a language gap. (Hirsh, 2002)

• For English Language Learners, the “achievement gap” is primarily a vocabulary gap. (Carlo, et al., 2004)

Vocabulary is related to reading comprehension.

“Indeed, one of the most enduring findings in reading research is the extent to which students’ vocabulary knowledge relates to their reading comprehension.”

(Osborn & Hiebert, 2004)
**Why - Vocabulary Instruction**

“direct vocabulary instruction has an impressive track record of improving students’ background knowledge and comprehension of academic content”

Marzano, 2001, p. 69

---

**Importance of Vocabulary Instruction - Conclusion**

- To close the vocabulary gap, vocabulary acquisition must be accelerated through intentional instruction.

- Vocabulary instruction must be a focus in all domains in all grades.

---

**Selection of Vocabulary**

- **Limit number** of words given **in depth instruction** to 4 to 5 words per session.

  (Robb, 2003)

  (Additional words can be given “lighter touch” instruction.)
Selection of Vocabulary

- Select words that are unknown.
- Select words that are critical to understanding.
- Select words that students are likely to encounter in the future and are generally useful. (Stahl, 1986)

Types of Words

- Tier One – Conversational Words
  - Most frequent words in language
  - Students acquire on their own.
  - Examples: chair, bed, happy, house

- Tier Two – General Academic Vocabulary
  - Less likely to be learned independently
  - Used across domains
  - Suitcase Words
    - Examples: analyze, summarize, determine, demonstrate, compare, contrast
    - absurd, fortunate, relieved, dignity, convenient, persistent

- Tier Three - Domain Specific Academic Vocabulary
  - Low frequency words
  - Limited to a specific domain
  - Critical for content area understanding and growth
  - Examples by domain
Types of Words

• Tier Three - Domain Specific Academic Vocabulary

**Language Arts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>setting</th>
<th>characters</th>
<th>plot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>events</td>
<td>problem</td>
<td>solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paragraph</td>
<td>synonym</td>
<td>context clues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Math**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>square</th>
<th>rectangle</th>
<th>cylinder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>greater than</td>
<td>less than</td>
<td>equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parallel</td>
<td>array</td>
<td>addend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fraction</td>
<td>table</td>
<td>centimeter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social Studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>town</th>
<th>city</th>
<th>suburb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>transportation</td>
<td>communication</td>
<td>family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relatives</td>
<td>generation</td>
<td>ancestors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cycle</th>
<th>water cycle</th>
<th>precipitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>evaporation</td>
<td>condensation</td>
<td>climate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selection of vocabulary

Select words that have **word relatives**.

- imperial
- imperialism
- imperialistic
- imperialistically

Selection of Vocabulary

Select words that contain **“meaningful parts”** (prefix, suffix, root) that would generalize to other vocabulary terms.

- autobiography
  - auto – self
- other words
  - automobile
  - autocrat
  - autoimmune system

Selection of vocabulary

Select words that are **more difficult** to obtain.

- Words having an abstract versus concrete reference
- Words with no known synonym
- Words not clearly defined in passage

Selection of Vocabulary - Summary

- Select a **limited number** of words.
- Select words that are **unknown**.
- Select words **critical** to passage or unit understanding.
- Select words that can be used in the **future**.
- Select words that have **word relatives**.
- Select words that contain **“meaningful parts”** (prefix, suffix, root).
- Select **difficult words** that need interpretation.
Selection of Words for Explicit Vocabulary Instruction (Narrative Text)

*Enemy Pie* by Derek Munson  
Second Grade  Read-Aloud

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>perfect</td>
<td>disgusting</td>
<td>nervous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trampoline</td>
<td>earthworms</td>
<td>invited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enemy</td>
<td>ingredients</td>
<td>relieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recipe</td>
<td>horrible</td>
<td>boomerang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selection of Words for Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Text: *American Journey*  
Chapter 11, Section 1  
Publisher: Glencoe  
Jacksonian Democracy

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>favorite son</td>
<td>majority</td>
<td>plurality</td>
<td>mudslinging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>landslide</td>
<td>nominating convention</td>
<td>tariff</td>
<td>suffrage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nullify</td>
<td>secede</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student-Friendly Explanation

- **Present a student-friendly explanation:**
  - Definition language is understandable
  - Aligns with the meaning of the word used in context

- **Options**
  - Use a student-friendly explanation in sentence form
  - Break the definition into the critical attributes

**Dictionary Definition**

*Attention* -  
- a. the act or state of attending through applying the mind to an object of sense or thought  
- b. a condition of readiness for such attention involving a selective narrowing of consciousness and receptivity

**Use a student-friendly explanation in sentence form**

*If you give someone or something your attention, you look at them, listen to them, or think about them carefully.*
Meaning – Critical Attributes

Definition: Suffrage is the right to vote in political elections

Break the definition into the critical attributes.
Suffrage
- the right
- to vote
- in political elections

Vocabulary Instruction Routine

Step 1: Introduce the word’s pronunciation.

   a) Write the word on the board or display the word on the screen.
   b) Read the word and have the students repeat the word.
   c) To ensure the correct pronunciation of the word, have students repeat the word a number of times OR have students tap and say the oral syllables in the word.

Step 2: Introduce the word’s meaning.

Step 3: Illustrate the word with examples.
   (and non-examples when helpful)

Step 4: Check students’ understanding.

   • This word is relieved. What word? relieved
   • Tap and say the syllables in relieved. re lied
   • Again. re lied
   • What word? relieved
Vocabulary Instruction Routine

Step 2. Introduce the word’s meaning.

Option 1: Present a student-friendly explanation.

a) Tell students the explanation. OR
b) Have them read the explanation with you.

When something that is difficult is over or never happened at all, you feel **relieved**. So if something that is difficult is over, you would feel ______________. **relieved**

Option 2: Break the definition into critical attributes.

Definition in text: A plain is a landform that is a large area of flat land with few trees.

- plain
  - landform
  - large area
  - of flat land
  - with few trees

Option 3: Analyze the parts of the word.

reconstruction
re construct tion
again build a noun

Step 3. Illustrate the word with examples.

a) Concrete examples
b) Visual examples
c) Verbal examples
Vocabulary Instruction Routine

Step 3. Illustrate the word with examples.
   a) Concrete examples
      Object
      Actions or gestures

Watch me show relieved.
Something difficult is over and I am relieved. (Teacher demonstrates relieved.) Show me how you would feel if you were relieved. (Students demonstrate relieved.)

Step 3. Illustrate the word with examples.
   b) Visual representations

| Displayed on screen | Marcus was relieved when the job interview was over. He felt __________ relieved |

Step 3. Illustrate the word with examples.
   c) Verbal examples

- When a difficult spelling test is over, you feel __________ relieved
- When you have finished giving the speech that you dreaded, you feel __________ relieved

Vocabulary Instruction Routine

Step 4. Check students’ understanding.
   Option #1. Ask deep processing questions.

When Maria was told that the soccer game had been cancelled, she said, “I am so relieved.” Why might Maria feel relieved? (Provide thinking time.)

Ones, tell your partner why Maria might feel relieved. Begin by saying: Maria might be relieved because.....
Vocabulary Instruction Routine

Step 4. Check students’ understanding.

Option #2. Have students discern between examples and non-examples.

If you were nervous singing in front of an audience, would you feel relieved when the concert was over (Provide thinking time.) yes Why?

If you loved singing in front of an audience, would you feel relieved when the concert was over? (Provide thinking time.) no Why not?

Instructional Routine

Step 1. Introduce the word’s pronunciation.
   a) Show the word on the screen.
   b) Read the word and have the students repeat the word. If the word is difficult to pronounce or unfamiliar have the students repeat the word a number of times or say the parts of the word as they tap.

   This word is suffrage. What word? suffrage
   Tap and say the parts of the word. suf fr age
   Read the word by parts. suf fr age
   What word? suffrage
   Suffrage is a noun.

Step 2. Introduce meaning of word.
   Option # 1. Present a student-friendly explanation.
      a) Tell students the explanation. OR
      b) Have them read the explanation with you.

   Present the definition with me.
   When someone has suffrage, they have the right to vote in an election.
Instructional Routine (continued)

Step 2. Introduce meaning of word.
Option # 2. Have students locate the definition in the glossary or text and break the definition into the critical attributes. OR
Present the definition using critical attributes.

Glossary: **Suffrage** - the right to vote

suffrage
- the right
- to vote

Instructional Routine (continued)

Step 2. Introduce meaning of word.
Option # 3. Introduce the word using the meaningful parts in the word.

- autobiography
  - auto = self
  - bio = life
  - graph = letters, words, or pictures
- hydroelectricity
  - hydro = water
- telescope
  - tele = distant
  - scope = look at

NOTE: 88% of key science words have Spanish cognates; 1/2 are high frequency words in Spanish

Instructional Routine (continued)

Step 3. Illustrate the word with examples.

a. Concrete examples
   - objects
   - acting out
b. Visual examples
   - objects
b. Verbal examples

Instructional Routine (continued)

Suffrage Examples

When the United States was founded only white men with property had **suffrage**.

At the time of the American Civil War, most white men had been granted **suffrage**.
Suffrage Examples

In 1920, women were granted suffrage. The passage of the Nineteenth Amendment granted women the right to vote in all United States elections.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed discriminatory voting practices that denied suffrage to many African Americans in the United States.

Instructional Routine (continued)

Step 4. Check students’ understanding.
Option #1. Ask deep processing questions.
Check students’ understanding with me.

Why is suffrage a critical aspect of a democracy?
Begin by saying or writing:

Suffrage is a critical aspect of democracy for the following reasons. First, ____________

Step 4. Check students’ understanding.
Option #2. Have students discern between examples and non-examples.
Check students’ understanding with me.

Tell me suffrage or not suffrage.
The right to run for elected office. not suffrage Why not?
The right to vote. suffrage Why?
The right to develop ads for a candidate. not suffrage Why not?
Instructional Routine (continued)

Step 4. Check students’ understanding.
Option #3. Have students generate their own examples.

Check students’ understanding with me.

Make a list of ways that suffrage could be limited or compromised.

Vocabulary Instructional Routine

Step 1: Introduce the word’s pronunciation.

Step 2: Introduce the word’s meaning.

Step 3: Illustrate the word with examples.
(and non-examples when helpful)

Step 4: Check students’ understanding.

In 1917, all women in the United States did not have suffrage, the right to vote. Suffragists in New York City collected more than a million signatures of women demanding voting rights. They then paraded down Firth Avenue with the signature placards.

Vocabulary Instruction - Extensions

1. Introduce the part of speech.

2. Introduce synonyms (same) and/or antonyms (opposite).

3. Tell students when and where the word is often used.
**Vocabulary Instruction - Extensions**

4. When appropriate, introduce the **history** or **origin** of the word.

5. Introduce other words in the same **word family**.

---

**Vocabulary Instruction**

Remember: After a word has been taught, introduce students to the word relatives.

- conform
- conforms
- conformed
- conforming
- conformity
- conformist
- non-conformist
- non-conforming
- non-conformity

---

**Vocabulary Logs**

- What can be recorded on a vocabulary log?
  - Word
  - Meaning in their own words OR
  - Critical attributes
  - Any of these options
    - A sentence to illustrate the word’s meaning
    - Examples and non-examples
    - An illustration (quick draw)

- In lower grades, create a group log on a flip chart.

---

**Conclusion**

“**Words are all we have.**”

Samuel Beckett