



Materiales de Contenido



ENGLISH
Grades 3–5

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Use digital and print references (i.e., dictionaries, thesauri, and glossaries) to determine word meanings. (LA.4) 24

General Introduction

This educational Content material, which is aligned with the alternate assessment skills of the DEPR, is pedagogical material containing several of the elements and resources necessary to model the alternate skills. It specifies how these skills can be developed in the classroom for students with significant cognitive impairments.

Within this Content material, you will find educational activities and strategies that are developed in line with the pace and skills of special education students. These activities and strategies are aligned with the general curriculum, PRCS 2014, and adapted to the skills of the grade level being measured in the alternate assessment.

This document was created in consonance with the content material posted by the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC). The NCSC conducts an alternate assessment aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

Vocabulary and Acquisition Content Material

I. PLANNING THE ACADEMIC ACTIVITY

A. Rationale

Vocabulary plays a critical role in the opportunities and possibilities available to people throughout their lives. Whether reading for pleasure, to understand content (such as science, social studies, etc.), or as a general skill (signs, applications, forms, etc.), determining the meaning of an unknown word is a lifelong skill necessary for success. All readers must understand the meanings of words in order to comprehend the text being read. Vocabulary instruction actually leads to greater comprehension. Furthermore, vocabulary is the single best indicator of overall knowledge.

The traditional approach of looking words up in the dictionary is not effective and no longer recommended (Stahl, 1999). When students write sentences and answer questions using the dictionary definition of a word, most of the sentences are odd (Miller and Gildea, 1985) and unacceptable (McKeown, 1991; McKeown 1993). Students frequently interpret one or two words from a definition as the entire meaning (Scott and Nagy, 1985) and therefore do not develop full understanding of the word. This may interfere with their comprehension. Lastly, it is important to note that a weak vocabulary is closely associated with school failure in disadvantaged student populations.

B. Content Goal

The goal of this Content material is to provide detailed information on vocabulary acquisition and the use of context clues to determine the meanings of unknown words and multiple-meaning words to teachers of students with disabilities at the primary and secondary school level. This Content material aims to provide teachers with a general overview of these concepts as well as teaching suggestions to aid them in instruction planning for these concepts. This content material also provides instructors with potential adaptations and modifications to consider when designing materials and instruction for students with severe disabilities.

C. Content material Objectives

After viewing the content material, special education teachers will:

1. understand the importance of vocabulary development and acquisition.
2. learn instructional strategies for teaching students how to learn unknown and multiple-meaning words in context.
3. learn instructional strategies for teaching students how to learn unknown and multiple-meaning words through meaningful word parts.

This content material focuses on vocabulary instruction within the BDA framework. It is organized using the following sections: Before the Lesson, During the Lesson, and After the Lesson. Suggestions for selecting words to study and utilizing pre-teaching methods to explain significant terms will be shared in the "Before the Lesson" section of the content material. Reading strategies for vocabulary acquisition, such as highlighting and studying terms in context, will be shared in the "During the Lesson" component. The "After the Lesson" section includes strategies to review, reinforce, and apply word-learning vocabulary used by the DEPR in its independent living curriculum.

II. BEFORE THE LESSON

A. What Is Vocabulary?

Vocabulary is knowledge of words and the meanings of words in both productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (listening and reading) forms of language. Knowing a word by sight and by sound and knowing its dictionary definition are not the same as knowing how to use the word correctly and understanding it when it is heard or seen in various contexts.

B. Selecting Vocabulary Words

How do we know which words are important to teach? In terms of vocabulary, the teacher's most important task is to select the most important or most frequently used vocabulary words for each lesson. Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2008) suggest that words can be divided into a system of three tiers. Tier-one words are basic words that rarely require instruction, such as "clock," "baby," and "happy." These words are especially important for English language learners (ELLs). Tier-two words are high-frequency words that students will encounter often and that are found across many domains, such as "fortunate" and "adapt." Tier-three words are low frequency and tend to be domain specific—for example, specialized content area words like

“isosceles,” “peninsula,” and “bucolic.” Provide instruction for tier-three words as needed.

When selecting words for instruction, teachers should focus on tier-two words that represent familiar concepts, are more precise or complex, are highly important or useful, and/or enhance conceptual understanding. Select approximately 2–5 tier-two words depending on the grade level and content area (i.e., science, social studies, etc.) of the learner(s) to read aloud or read independently from books.

Check for understanding:

You will also find a series of PowerPoint presentations containing information, examples, and instructional suggestions in “Appendices.”

1. Vocabulary bookmarks / vocabulary journals

Another approach to selecting words for further exploration is to give students opportunities to collect words they do not understand. A vocabulary log allows students to record any interesting, new, or unknown words they come across in their reading. It asks them to write down the word, the date they found it, where they found it, and what they think it means. As an alternative approach, students can record their words onto bookmarks such as the sample found below. Every week or two, the teacher will bring students together to share the words they have collected, record them on a large chart paper, and discuss them. Collectively, choose 2–3 words to study in depth over the next few weeks. Students will be more motivated to explore the words more in depth if they are interested in the selected words and take ownership.

Samples:

Vocabulary Bookmark	
Name: _____	
Book: _____	
Page ____	Word
Page ____	Word
Page ____	

Vocabulary Bookmark

Name: _____

Book: _____

Word _____

Page _____

Word _____

Personal Vocabulary Journal

My new word is		
It is related to		
I found it		
I think it means		
Definition		
Example		
Picture		

C. Vocabulary for Context

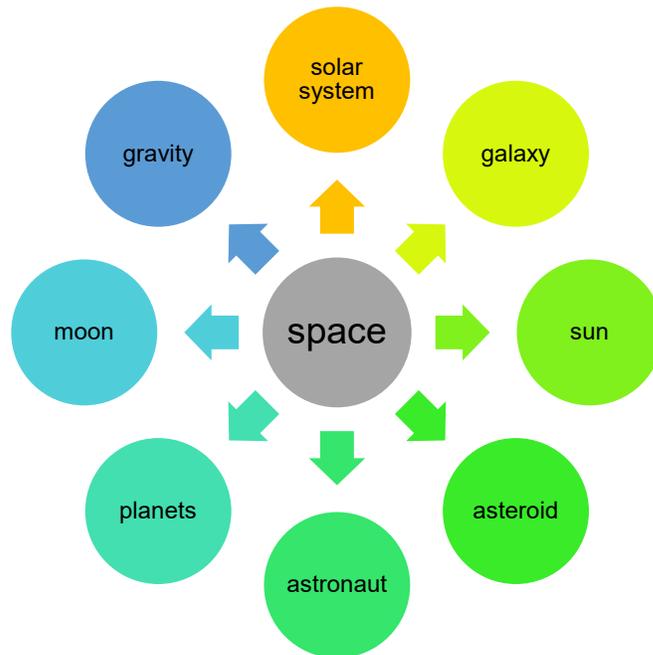
It is important for students to engage with the words before, during, and after reading. Below, you will find a list of pre-reading vocabulary suggestions to activate and strengthen students' background knowledge. While providing vocabulary instruction, you may consider including pictures or objects to

make the instruction more concrete for students with disabilities. See “Other Ideas to Support Pre-Reading Vocabulary Learning” below.

1. Word maps

Use word maps to activate prior knowledge of a topic. Begin by selecting a word or topic and recording it in the center of the word map. Before reading, ask students to brainstorm related words and record their answers around the center of the word map. Review the words and determine whether they could be reorganized or grouped into categories. The teacher and class can work together to brainstorm these categories and classify the words. Return to the word map during and after reading. Invite students to add new words based on the reading.

Sample Word Map



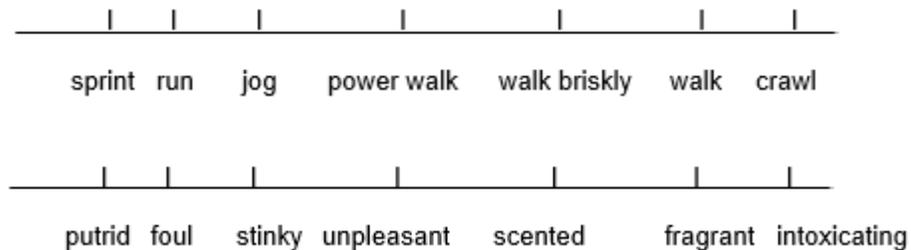
D. Other Ideas to Support Pre-Reading Vocabulary Learning

Use visual representations (images, videos, graphics, etc.) of vocabulary words to demonstrate their meanings. For example, the following images could be shared to pre-teach the word “frozen.” See “Appendices” for “PowerPoint Presentation: Choosing Vocabulary Words for Instruction.”



Place vocabulary words on a continuum to demonstrate degree of meaning.

Sample:



III. DURING THE LESSON

Before you can begin teaching your students about vocabulary skills from LA.4 and LA.5, it is important for you to first have a deep understanding of effective instructional strategies and approaches to ensure that students are successful in these important learning standards.

Below is a list of skills from the Language Standard of the Puerto Rico Core Standards for grades 3–5. Several instructional strategies, some of which may be familiar to you, are also provided for each skill. If you need more information about any of the strategies, please refer to the examples, additional resources, and instructional templates provided, as needed.

Skills from PRCS LA.4 and LA.5:

- Using a range of strategies, identify unknown and multiple-meaning words based on the appropriate reading and content level for the grade.
- Use context as a clue to word meanings.
- Use digital and print references (i.e., dictionaries, thesauri, and glossaries) to determine word meanings.

A. Content Standards Aligned with the Alternate Assessment Skills

Grade	Content Standard	Expectations	Skills
3	Language	LA.4. Determine or clarify the meanings of unknown words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting reference materials.	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on class reading and content area study, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.
4			Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on class reading and content area study, choosing from a variety of strategies, such as context clues, illustrations, etc.
5			Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on developmentally appropriate reading and content, choosing flexibly from a variety of strategies.
3		LA.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and variations in word meanings.	Identify figurative language, word relationships, and differences in word meanings.
4			Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and slight variations in word meanings.
5			Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and differences in word meanings.

B. Universal Design for Learning

Principles	Impairment Category			
	Visual Impairment or Deaf/Blind	Orthopedic Impairment / Multiple Impairments	Intellectual Impairment	Emotional Impairment
Representation	Use a talking device such as an avatar; use large-print text, raised text, or	Ask students to scan an array of possible options and use a switch to	Ask students to use online dictionaries to pronounce and	Use motivating objects (e.g., pizza, a box of colored markers,

	<p>Braille; use objects and images to represent vocabulary words and their meanings; use online dictionaries that will pronounce the words and read the definitions aloud; use matching picture cards with words and their meanings.</p>	<p>select the correct vocabulary word or meaning; use computer representations of word meanings that can be manipulated with a switch; place vocabulary words on a slant board or eye gaze board; create a classroom activity in which students are invited to walk or ride in a wheelchair to find the matching words and meanings (this can include picture clues).</p>	<p>define words; use online visual dictionaries; Ask students to use one-to-one correspondence to match words with definitions; pre-teach vocabulary; highlight important vocabulary words within the context of the reading.</p>	<p>pieces of a Lego set) to incorporate key vocabulary; incorporate technology, including computer representations, videos, animations, and talking avatars; encourage students to self-select words for study.</p>
Expression	<p>Ask students to state the answer; use voice output devices for students to select the correct answer; teach tangible symbols that have the same meanings as the vocabulary words.</p>	<p>Use a switch to indicate correct answers; use an eye gaze board to select answer; use a blink response to count parts or select answer; phrase questions so that they require a “yes/no” response, which can easily be answered using a head turn/nod, two switches, etc.</p>	<p>Ask students to select vocabulary words or meanings instead of writing them; ask students to select the correct answer after using models; ask students to answer “yes/no” questions.</p>	<p>Ask students to express word meanings with images, drawings, interactive computer programs, etc.</p>
Engagement	<p>Teach students to use their hands to scan the raised parts of different items; use a talking calculator to compute area; start with simple, clearly</p>	<p>Use bright colors to draw attention to vocabulary words; use a computer with AT so the student can click to answer; use word cards that are large</p>	<p>Ask students to use online dictionaries that pronounce the words and read the definitions.</p>	<p>Create games in which students interact with partners to determine word meanings (i.e., a word matching</p>

	defined fractions; use items that are familiar and reinforcing to students.	enough to accommodate each student's range of motion; pair each student with another student without a physical impairment and ask them to work together to create word and meaning matches.		game like Memory).
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C. Key Principles of Vocabulary Instruction

- Appropriate selection of high-frequency words used in speech (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan, 2002)
- Active engagement and interaction with words
- Relating new words to semantically similar words
- Using contextual approaches
- Explicitly teaching key vocabulary before, during, and after reading
- Making associations with background knowledge
- Developing higher-level word knowledge—not just copying from dictionary
- Using student-friendly explanations
- Providing multiple opportunities for exposure to key terms
- Drills and practice!

According to the National Reading Panel (2000), there is no single instructional method to teach vocabulary that will result in optimal learning. Effective instruction must incorporate a variety of methods to help students acquire new words and increase the depth of their word knowledge over time. There must be a balance between indirect learning and direct instruction of the words required to understand a given text.

Samples:

Direct – Giant means big.

Indirect – The giant is taller than the building.

Direct vocabulary is more effective when teachers provide clear, kid-friendly definitions. For instance, when teaching the word “nuisance,” the teacher might explain that someone who is a nuisance is bothering you. Multiple, varied, and enriching opportunities to interact with the words are essential for deeper understanding.

D. Using a range of strategies, identify unknown and multiple-meaning words based on the appropriate reading and content level for the grade. (LA.4)

In addition to direct instruction of vocabulary, students can learn words incidentally through reading and listening. In fact, the best way to develop vocabulary is to promote ample reading. The amount of time spent reading is the best predictor of vocabulary development after the second grade. Read-alouds offer opportunities for students to be exposed to new words. Instruction of the meaning of these unfamiliar words during read-alouds improves incidental word learning.

The use of read-alouds is particularly important for struggling readers, who typically read less and have a lower reading level. Children who have difficulty reading are also at risk of falling behind their peers in vocabulary development. According to the Matthew Effect, struggling readers may become frustrated, read less, encounter fewer words, and therefore learn less vocabulary over time.

E. Use context as a clue to word meanings. (LA.4)

The use of context to discern the meaning of unknown words is a complex skill that requires students to make inferences. Many clues are often subtle and do not offer enough information to fully understand the meaning of the word. Struggling readers often have a limited understanding of context. Beers (2003) describes four types of context clues, including (1) definition clues, (2) synonym clues, (3) opposite clues, and (4) gist clues.

- 1. definition clues** – The word is defined within the same sentence.

Sample: A hero is someone who displays admirable qualities and characteristics.

- 2. synonym clues** – The meaning of the word is restated in simpler terms or with the use of synonyms. These context clues may or may not be found within the same sentence. This type of context clue is common in content area texts.

Sample: The tundra, a treeless area in the Arctic region, is among the earth’s coldest and harshest biomes.

- 3. opposite clues** – An opposite meaning of the word is given in the same sentence or in a subsequent sentence.

Sample: James is outgoing, but his brother Alexander is timid.

- 4. gist clues** – The meaning of the word must be inferred from the overall context. This is the most subtle and difficult type of clue. Sometimes, readers will need to read the whole passage before they understand the meaning of the word.

Sample: No one seems to be able to get along with my ornery cousin, Michelle. She is a picky eater, only likes to play certain games, and is stubborn about always taking the first turn at anything we do.

Teacher think-alouds are a helpful tool for modeling how to weave meaning from the various clues and overall gist of the text.

Special educators must teach students HOW to find the definition of a word within a passage using context clues. When students are taught how to use context as a clue, they can begin to see word associations and infer meaning. Through modeling and think-alouds, you can show students how to determine the meaning of a word within a passage. See “Sample Teacher Think-Aloud” below.

Sample Teacher Think-Aloud:

A second-grade teacher is reading the book *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes aloud to her students. She pauses often to model the use of context clues to determine word meanings. The teacher reads, “Chrysanthemum wilted. She did not think her name was absolutely perfect. She thought it was absolutely dreadful.”

After reading this sentence, the teacher pauses and thinks aloud to demonstrate her thought process to determine the meaning of the word “wilted” in this context. “Readers, I am going to stop reading here for a moment and think about a new word I came across in this sentence. The word is ‘wilted.’ Let me go back and reread the passage. [The teacher rereads the passage.] Hmm, I am wondering what Kevin

Henkes means by 'Chrysanthemum wilted.' As we read on, he tells us that she did not think her name was perfect anymore and that she indeed thought it was dreadful. Something that is dreadful is not good, so she went from feeling happy to feeling not so good anymore. I also think I have heard the word 'wilted' before to describe plants when they do not get enough water. The plants get droopy. [The teacher acts this out to show students what "droopy" looks like.] If Chrysanthemum wilted, maybe she is feeling pretty sad. I think she is upset because the other kids are teasing her about her name. [The teacher refers to the previous section in the text.] I think 'wilted' must therefore mean 'to feel sad.' "

1. Cloze strategy

The cloze strategy is an effective way to teach the use of context clues. To prepare a cloze activity, delete only one word from each sentence of the passage. Be careful not to remove too many words. This could pose comprehension challenges to students. Students read the passage. Then, they try to determine the missing word. Model how to rely on the surrounding context to help students identify the missing words.

Sample Cloze Activity:

forgot	nodded	thanked	started
share	opened	having	

Ariana and Yazmín were _____ a picnic at Central Park. Suddenly, it _____ raining, so they decided to get their things quickly and go home. Ariana said, "Oh no! I _____ to bring my umbrella!" "Would you like to _____ an umbrella with me?" asked Yazmín. Ariana smiled and _____ her head. She _____ Yazmín for her kindness. Yazmín _____ the umbrella, and they hurried home.

F. Use frequent root words, affixes, and common Greek and Latin roots to determine word meanings. (LA.4)

Teaching students word parts—such as the meanings of prefixes, suffixes, and roots—will help them increase their knowledge of words. A list of common roots and affixes is provided below:

Prefix	Meaning	Root	Meaning	Examples
re-	again	act	to move or do	react
pre-	before	view	to see	preview
un-	not	happy	glad	unhappy
trans-	across	port	to carry	transport

Suffix	Meaning	Root	Meaning	Examples
-ed	past tense verb	play	to move lightly and quickly	played
-ly	how something is / how something happens	friend	someone you like or love	friendly
-ful	full of	joy	feeling of happiness	joyful
-less	without	help	assistance	helpless

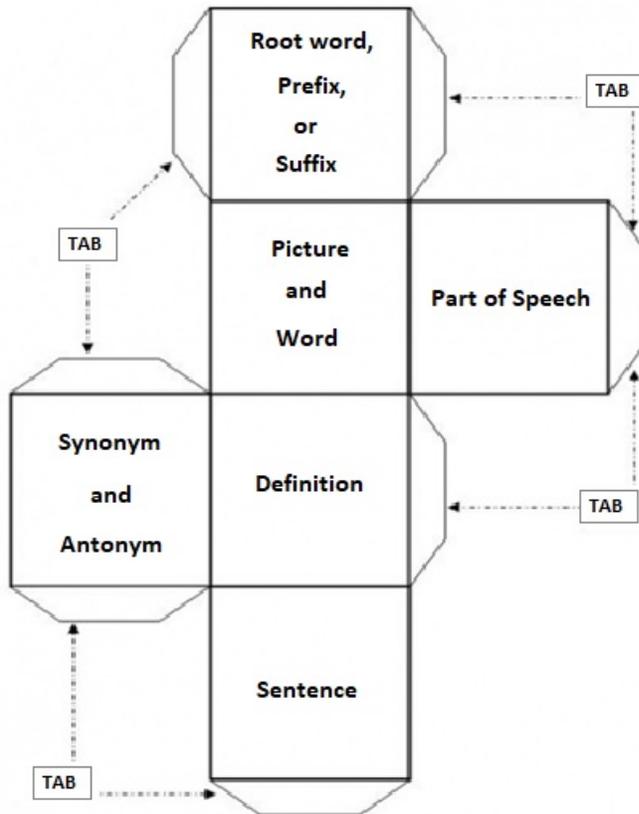
G. Vocabulary Word Cube

The vocabulary word cube is an activity similar to the word map in that it helps students research the word. Students create word cubes by identifying the following information on each side of the cube:

1. **Identify the word** – Write the word and add a picture if possible. Either choose a word from a sentence, paragraph, or story or choose one given by the teacher.
2. **Analyze the word** – List the parts of speech.
3. **Analyze the word** – Identify and write the root word, prefix, or suffix.

4. **Define the word** – Write a brief definition.
5. **Apply the word** – Write a sentence.
6. **Compare the word** – Explain what is similar to or different from the word. List any synonyms and antonyms associated with the word.

Vocabulary Word Cube Template:



IV. AFTER THE LESSON

Below, you will find information and strategies on the application of vocabulary acquisition to real-world situations, preparation skills for postsecondary transition addressed through the teaching of these concepts, and the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. One way to assist in a special educator’s development within this curricular area is by collaborating with other teachers in your building. These skills are often practiced outside of an English classroom in other curricular areas as well as during everyday activities. Some activities with real-world applications include:

- Associate vocabulary learned in the classroom to current events happening around the world. This enables students to see the word used outside of the context of a book. This helps students understand of the relevance of content and therefore increases engagement.
- Vocabulary can be classified according to real-world contexts: countries, activities, cleaning, cooking, conversations, etc.

A. Skills for Postsecondary Transition

In addition to the real-world applications of these concepts, skills taught in this content material also promote the following college and career readiness skills:

1. Communicative competence

Students will expand their vocabulary to include concepts related to vocabulary acquisition and application. They will also improve their ability to effectively communicate with others due to their expanded vocabulary. Students will begin to understand the importance of written and spoken communication with others.

2. Fluency in reading, writing, and math

Students will be offered opportunities to enhance their fluency and comprehension as their vocabulary skills improve. Students with a stronger foundation in vocabulary studies will be able to process text at a faster pace. They will also understand the text in greater depth.

3. Age-appropriate social skills

Students will engage in peer groups to discover new vocabulary and communication skills.

4. Independent work behaviors

Students will read independently. They will gain an increased understanding of words in a real-life context.

5. Skills in accessing support systems

Students may sometimes need to ask for assistance to complete vocabulary acquisition and application activities. This will offer them opportunities to practice accessing supports and asking for tools such as dictionaries and thesauri. . If the task involves physical movement, they can ask a peer to complete the

maneuvers they are unable to complete themselves. Always encourage students to ask questions. Do not automatically provide them with items or supports.

In addition to collaborating with other special educational professionals in your teacher network, the following list of resources may also provide you with ideas for activities or a more thorough understanding of the mathematical concepts presented in this content material.

B. Resources/Links

Reading Rockets (2021). Retrieved August 19, 2021 from https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/possible_sentences. “Possible sentences” is a pre-reading strategy that enables students to explore vocabulary and utilize their prior knowledge to make predictions and discuss unknown words.

Reading Rockets (2011). Retrieved August 19, 2021 from <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/top-10-resources-vocabulary>. This list provides teachers with effective classroom strategies—such as word maps, list-group-label activities, and semantic feature analysis—to enhance vocabulary instruction.

Quizlet (2007). Retrieved August 19, 2021 from <https://quizlet.com/>. This website enables teachers to create personalized vocabulary word sets for units of study to help students learn the meanings of unknown words.

Teaching Channel (2021). Retrieved August 19, 2021 from <https://learn.teachingchannel.com/video/making-vocabulary-lesson-interactive>. This video demonstrates a method of conducting hands-on and interactive vocabulary instruction and strengthening students’ vocabulary through analogies by way of a strategy called “Kick Me.”

[Word Study in Action](#) (2011). Retrieved August 19, 2021. These word study videos provide lesson models to instruct teachers on the use of word sorts to help students with vocabulary development, spelling patterns, and multiple-meaning words.

Vocabulary Development and Word Study Instruction (2012). Retrieved August 19, 2021 from https://www.timrasinski.com/presentations/vocabulary_presentation.pdf. This program overview by Timothy Rasinski focuses on the use of Greek and Latin roots to teach the meanings of vocabulary words.

Read Write Think (2021). Retrieved August 19, 2021 from <https://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/introducing-ideas-vocabulary>. This guide shows how the concept sort

strategy can be used to introduce students to new vocabulary words before reading and also how to encourage students to demonstrate their learning of new words after reading.

V. REFERENCES

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National Reading Panel (2000). *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Scott, J.A., and Nagy, W. E. (December 1989). *Fourth Graders' Knowledge of Definitions and How They Work*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Reading Conference, Austin, TX.

Stahl, S.A. (1999). *Vocabulary Development*. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books, 1999.

VI. APPENDICES

Choosing vocabulary words for instruction



Juan avoided playing the trumpet.



Which word would you choose to pre-teach?

Choosing vocabulary words for instruction

Which word would you choose to pre-teach?

Few people travel to the frozen tundra region.



Did you select the correct word?

•Juan avoided playing the trumpet.

Did you select the correct word?

•Few people travel to the frozen tundra region.

Explanation

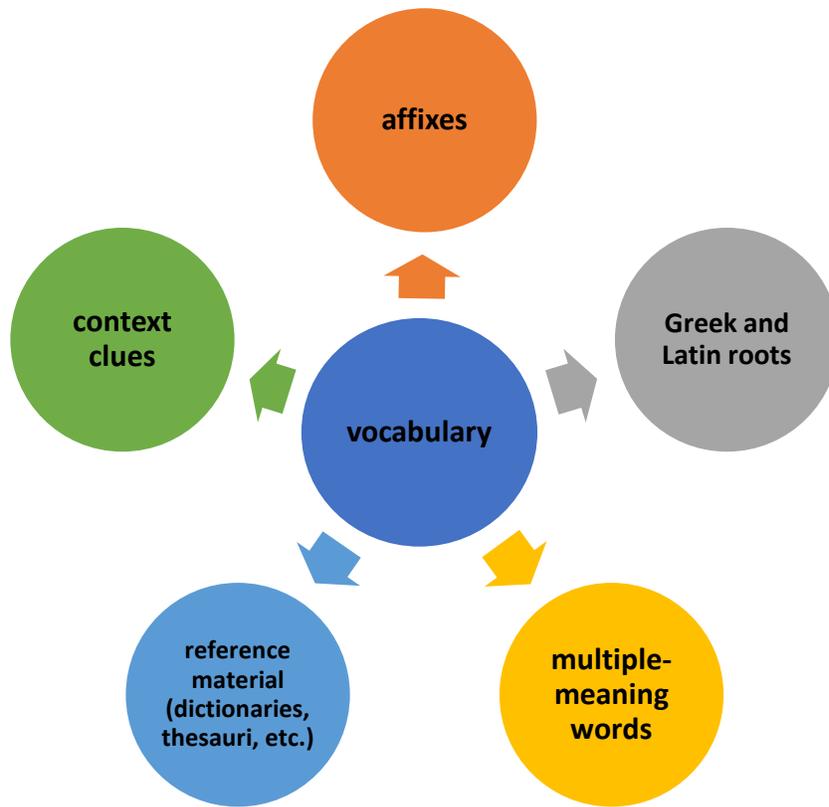
You should select the word avoid for instruction. Avoid is a tier-two word. Students are likely to see this word again.

The word trumpet is rarely seen in print or used in stories or conversations and is therefore a tier-three word.

Explanation

You should select the word frozen for instruction. Frozen is a tier-two word. Students are likely to see this word again.

The word tundra is rarely seen in print beyond content area texts and is a tier-three word.



Free online vocabulary games:

Develop engagement with words while contributing to social welfare –

<https://www.freerice.com/categories/english-vocabulary>

Use digital and print references (i.e., dictionaries, thesauri, and glossaries) to determine word meanings.

(LA.4)

Online visual dictionaries:

Merriam-Webster – <http://visual.merriam-webster.com/>

Enchanted Learning – <https://www.enchantedlearning.com/>

Incorporating Technology into Word Learning:

Free online word cloud tool with which students can click on words to see related images, a word map, and context from text that is cut and pasted into the application – <https://wordsift.org/>