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<h2 style="margin: 0;">Building Better Vocabulary for Middle and High School Students</h2> <p style="margin: 10px 0 0 0;">Presenter: Shari Robertson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0 0 0;">Moderated by: Amy Hansen, M.A., CCC-SLP, Managing Editor, SpeechPathology.com</p>	

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**Building Better Vocabulary****For Middle and High School Students****Shari Robertson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP**


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**Today we will:**

- Briefly review relevant research and background information related to the development of vocabulary.
- Discuss the critical components of quality vocabulary instruction.
- Explore multiple strategies for building academic vocabulary for adolescents.

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## Language and Literacy

- Children whose oral language skills are weak during the preschool years are at increased risk for developing reading problems (Snowling, 2005).
- Among children with reduced oral language skills in Kindergarten, 70% were identified with a reading disability in first or second grade (Catts et al., 2002).
- Children with weak oral vocabulary skills at 5 ½ were found to have poor reading comprehension at 8 ½ and 15 ½ (Stothard et al., 1998)

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“When the lights went out suddenly, I purchased the nearest thing: An echinated vine! Such was my distress that I immediately defenestrated the plant.”

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Why did you buy a vine when the lights went out?????

You didn't.

It actually has nothing to do with shopping.

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### Purchase

1. to obtain (goods, etc) by payment
2. to obtain by effort, sacrifice, etc: to purchase one's freedom.
3. to draw, haul, or lift (a load) with the aid of mechanical apparatus
4. to obtain a firm foothold or (to grasp)

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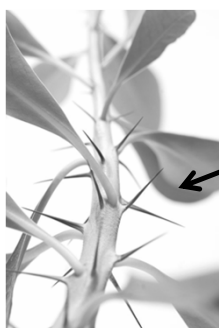
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Why were you distressed after grabbing the vine?



OUCH!

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What happened to the plant?

**Defenestration:**

The act of throwing a person or thing out the window

**Latin:**

**de-** (down or away)

**fenestra** (window or opening)

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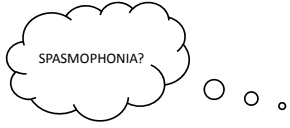
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**Adolescents need:**

1. A robust vocabulary to support comprehension of higher level academic subjects.



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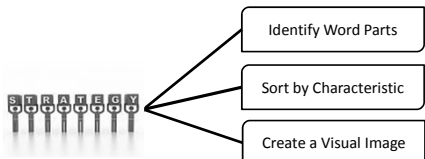
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2. A set of strategies to establish the meanings of unknown words from context



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**Academic Vocabulary: A TWO HEADED MONSTER!**

- **Content Vocabulary** = words or concepts specific to a single discipline (e.g., biology)
- **Academic Language** = words common to multiple disciplines that are important to be able to process information, complete assignments, participate in discussion, take tests, etc.

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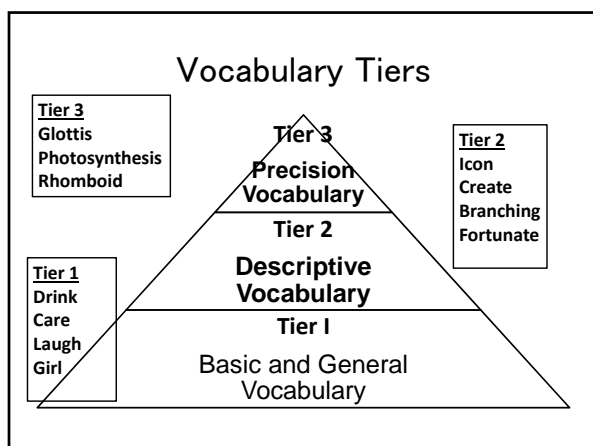
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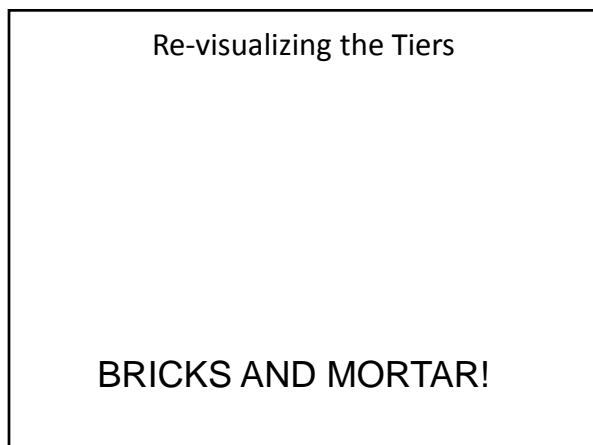
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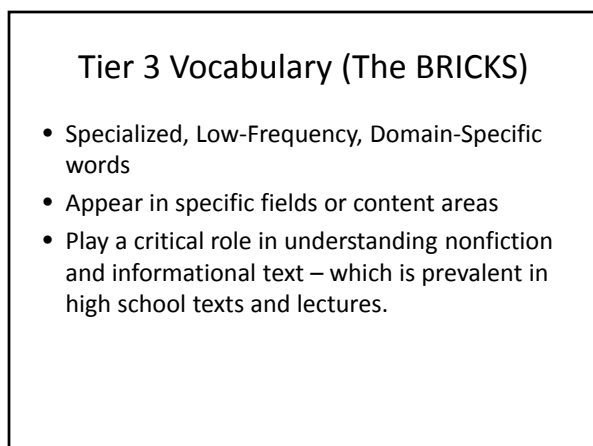
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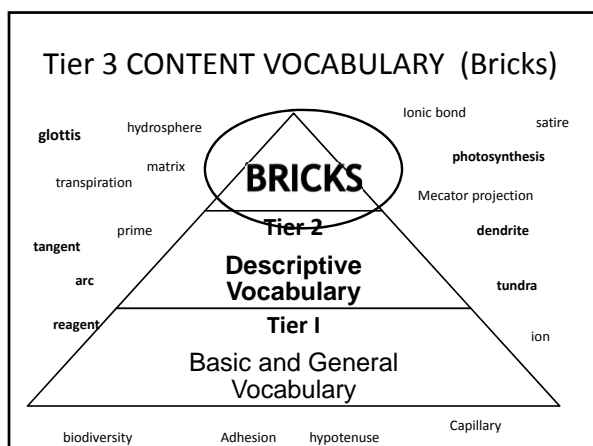
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### Tier 2 Vocabulary (The MORTAR)

- General utility vocabulary necessary for constructing sentences and paragraphs or engaging in academic (and non-academic) discussions.
- Often used in test questions, assignments etc. (e.g., analyze, plan, compare, evaluate)
- Connecting Words (e.g., however, whereas, consequently)
- Prepositions (e.g., under, behind, between)
- **Essential to comprehension**

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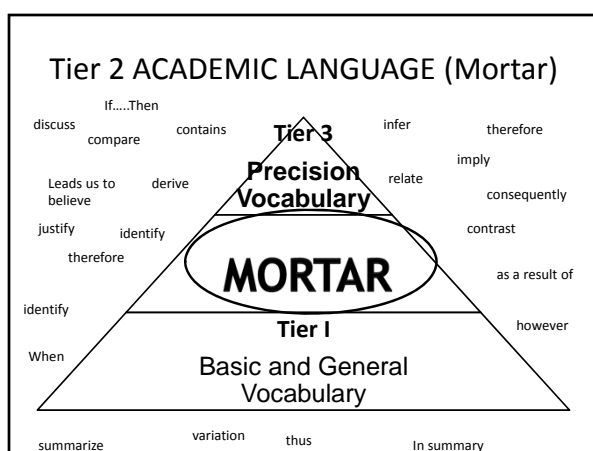
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## OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

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- To help our students become  
WORD CONSCIOUS

(This is true regardless of age or targeted  
vocabulary)

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### *Word Conscious* Students:

- ❖ have an awareness and interest in words, their  
meaning, and their power.
- ❖ enjoy words and are eager to learn new words  
and to use them.

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### Look to the Research!

What the literature tells us about  
effective vocabulary instruction

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1. Effective vocabulary instruction does not rely on definitions.
2. Teaching word parts enhances learning.
3. Students must represent their knowledge of words in both linguistic and non-linguistic ways.
4. Active engagement and visual imagery improve learning.
5. Playing with words is an effective way to help students become more word conscious.
6. Repeated exposure is essential.

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## Learning Word Meanings

Research tells us that one of the LEAST effective ways for students to learn word meanings is to copy definitions from a dictionary

"Finding word definitions and writing those words in sentences has very little impact on word knowledge and language use."

Janet Allen, 1999

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## How NOT to teach Academic (or any other) Vocabulary

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- Looking up definitions (in the absence of other strategies)
- Providing only one or two exposures to a word
- Drill-and-practice that involve multiple exposures of the same type of information, fill in the blank, matching, word banks, etc.

**BORING!!**

"Although studies indicate that some intervention is better than none, rote memorization of words and definitions is the least effective instructional method, resulting in little long-term effect."  
(Kameenui, Dixon and Carine, 1987; Baker, Simmons, and Kameenui, 1995).

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## The Case Against Using only Dictionary Definitions

When people first learn words, they understand them as descriptions rather than definitions

(Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013)

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WORD	DICTIONARY DEFINITION	DESCRIPTION
Illusion	An erroneous perception of reality	Something that looks like one thing but is really something else or is not there at all

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When asked to write a sentence using  
a dictionary...

- 63% of student's sentences were judged to be "odd." (Miller and Garcia, 1985)
- 60% of students' responses were considered by teachers to be unacceptable. (McKeown, 1991, 1993)
- Students did not retain or assimilate information effectively.

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**Strategies for Word Learning:  
Some BETTER WAYS!**

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### Four Square Frayer Model

<b>Definition</b> <i>A solid made up of atoms in an ordered pattern</i>	<b>Characteristics</b> <i>~Glassy ~Evenly shaped ~Clear or colored</i>
<b>Exemplars</b> <i>~Rocks ~Salt ~Sugar</i>	<b>Non Exemplars</b> <i>~Coal ~Pepper ~Lava</i>

**Crystal**

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Four Square	
Frayer Model	
<b>Definition</b> <i>An extreme state of agitation</i>	<b>Characteristics</b> <i>Stress, anxiety, tension, hostility, tears, physical symptoms</i>
<b>Swivet</b>	
<b>Exemplars</b> ???	<b>Non Exemplars</b> ???

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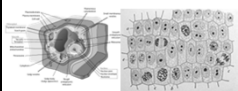
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Four Square	
VVWA Model (verbal and visual word association)	
<b>Term</b> 	<b>Visual Representation</b> 
<b>Definition</b> It is a very tiny structure that makes up all plants and animals	<b>Personal Association</b> It reminds me of rooms in a house. Each one is different, but together they make a home.

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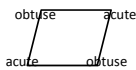

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Four Square for MATH!	
Definition	Formulas
A parallelogram with four equal sides (Looks like a diamond)	<b>Area formula:</b> $A = b \times h$ (base X height) <b>Perimeter formula:</b> $b+b+b+b$
<b>Rhombus</b>	
 <p>Has opposite and equal acute angles and opposite and equal obtuse angles</p>	 <p>Find Perimeter  <math>6.7+6.7+6.7+6.7 = 26.8</math>            Find Area:  <math>6.0 \times 6.7 = 40.2</math></p>
Visual Representation	Application /Sample

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## Pick Six

<p>Synonyms</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 80%; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <p>Antonyms</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 80%;"></div>	<p>Word</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">EXTINCT</div>	<p>Other Forms of the Word</p> <p>Extinction Extinguished extinguisher</p>
<p>Sentence in Text</p> <p>Scientists have discovered a lot about extinct animals by studying their fossils</p>	<p>Picture</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Dodo Bird</p> </div>	<p>Original Sentence</p> <p>ENDANGERED animal species MAY become extinct IF WE DO NOT WORK TO PROTECT THEM</p>

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## Word/Concept Maps

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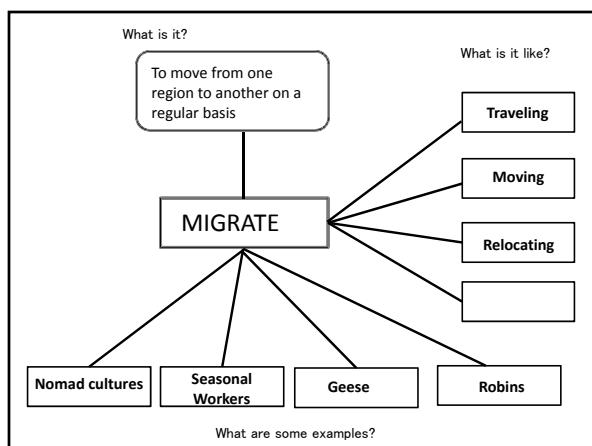
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~~im~~possible

~~im~~patient

~~im~~safe

~~un~~known

~~un~~employed

### Learning Word Parts to Enhance Vocabulary Knowledge

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### SEEP (foldable)

STEM (word part: prefix, root, suffix)	EXAMPLES	EXPLANATIONS	PICTURE
MAL-	Malpractice  Malevolent  Malodorous  Malificent (Sleeping Beauty)  Draco Malfoy (Harry Potter)	SOMETHING BAD or EVIL	  

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### MORE SEEPs

STEM	EXAMPLE	EXPLANATION	PICTURE
<u>Poly-</u>	Polycystic (Many cysts) Polygon (Many sides)	Many, Excessive	
<u>-Plasty</u>	Rhinoplasty (nose) Angioplasty (heart) Palatoplasty (palate)	Surgical Modification or Repair	

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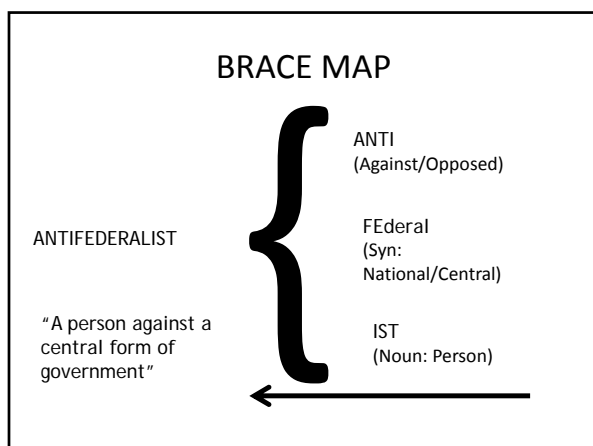
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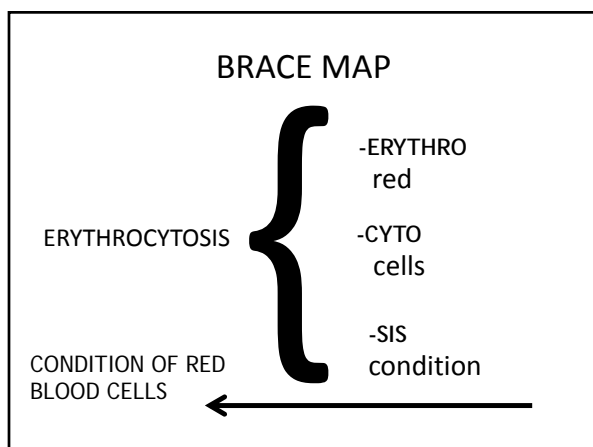
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**AGRI-SCIENCE ANYONE?**

(Word Parts, Visualization, Play with Words, Tap into Previous Word Knowledge)

Merry Kim Meyers

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### Conquering Scientific Vocabulary (Latin Names)

*Latin is a dead language*

*As dead as dead can be*

*First, it killed the Romans*

*And now it's killing me!*

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### Conquering Scientific (Latin)Names

- Don't let Scientific names of plants overwhelm you.
- English, Spanish, French, Italian, and Romanian languages all have a common base language: Latin.
- Use your common sense and background knowledge to figure out a familiar, logical meaning for the genus or species name.
- It will help you identify something about the plant's history, taxonomy, or uses.

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Directions: Use Dirr's Manual of Woody Landscape Plants along with your common sense and experiences to figure out specific facts about plants based on the scientific name.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Characteristic
EX: Red Mulberry	<i>Morus rubra</i>	rubra = Red like Ruby
Aspen	<i>Populus tremuloides</i>	
Weeping Larch	<i>Larix decidua</i> 'Pendula'	
Sugar Maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	

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## BRAIN DRAIN

Just use your head to figure a possible characteristic from the scientific name.

Sketch what you think this plant might look like.

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## *Magnolia grandiflora*



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## *Corylus avellana* 'Contorta'



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*Ginkgo biloba*



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*Toxicodendron vernix*



(Common Name = Poison Ivy!)

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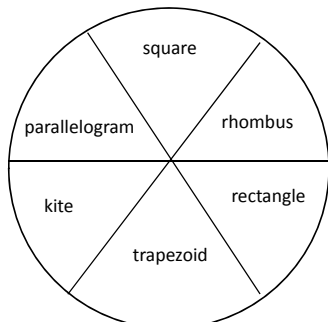
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Concept Circles

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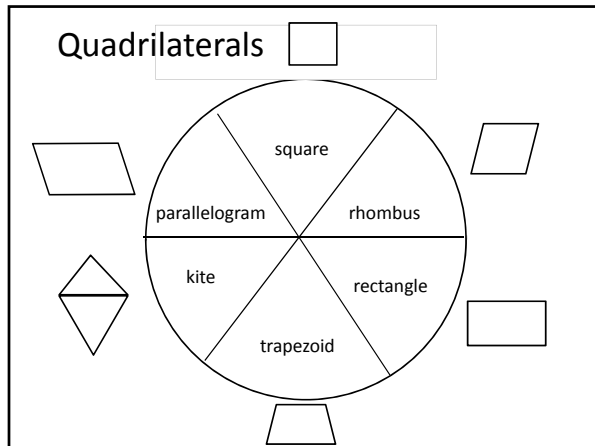
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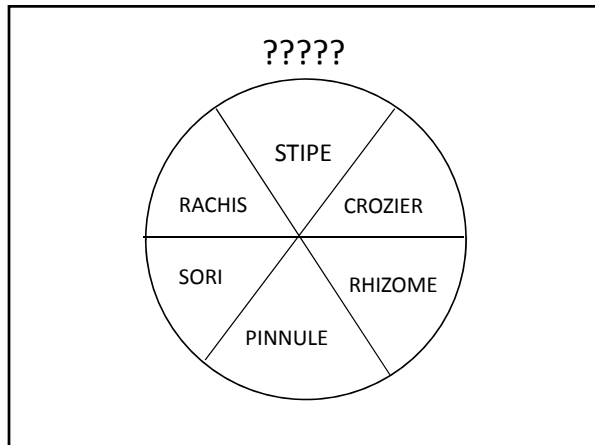
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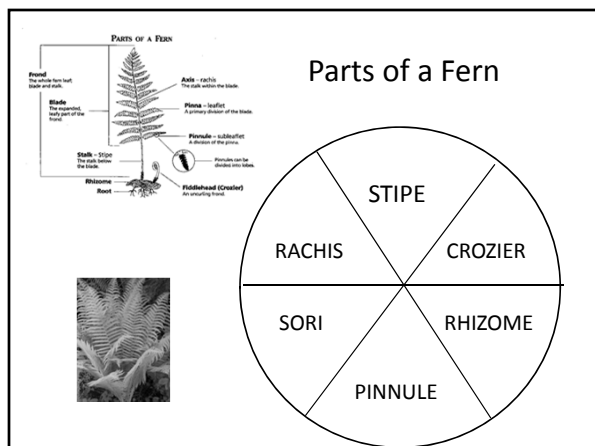
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**Feature Analysis**  
 (HINT: [www.mathisfun.com](http://www.mathisfun.com))

(Obligatory) (*Non Obligatory)	Equilateral	Equiangular	4 sides	Opposite sides parallel
Square	YES	YES	YES	YES
Rectangle	NO	YES	YES	YES
Triangle	NO*	NO*	NO	NO
Rhombus	YES	NO	YES	YES
Trapezoid	NO	NO	YES	YES
Regular polygon	NO*	NO*	NO*	NO*

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**Alike/Different**

- Both Words \_\_\_\_\_
- But the First Word \_\_\_\_\_
- And the Other Word \_\_\_\_\_
  
- This task fosters both broad (horizontal) and deep (vertical) vocabulary knowledge.

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### Hand, Fathom

Both Words \_\_\_\_\_

But the First Word \_\_\_\_\_

And the Other Word \_\_\_\_\_

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### Hand, Fathom

Both Words refer to measurement

But the First Word measures horse height

And the Other Word measures water depth

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### Stoma, Photosynthesis

Both Words refer to plant biology

But the First Word is a part of a plant

And the Other Word is a process used by plants  
to convert energy

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### Pachyderm, Clown, Tent

- All of these words are part of the circus
- But the first word is an animal in the circus
- And the second word is a person in the circus
- And the last word is an object that is part of the circus

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### Synapse, Nucleus, Dendrite

- All these words are
- But the first is
- And the second is
- And the third is

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### Pluto, Andromeda, Draco

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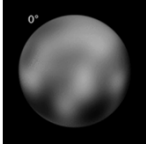
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### Pluto, Andromeda, Draco




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### Word Sorts




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### Word Sorts

- Word sorts are powerful activities that can be modified for use with individuals, small groups, or entire classes.
- The basic premise is to take a group of words and sort them into various categories.
- The key to making word sorts really work is to encourage students to think creatively about how words can be grouped and labeled.
- The goal is for students to brainstorm, discuss, compromise, and create!

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- Student/s begin to sort their words into groups of two words or more by some specific parameter.
- Student/s then select a label that defines the group.
- Student/s continue to sort, group, and label until all words are assigned to a category.
- Student/s share their categorization schemes and discuss their rationale for organizing and grouping the words.

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### SAMPLE OF WORDS TO SORT

design	code	congruent	denouement
denominator	devise	conflict	introspective
deduce	spectator	speculate	enforcement
hyperbolic	stoic	hemispheric	implement
designate	continuum	commitment	perspective
area	hypothesize	succinct	complimentary

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### FIRST SORT

Starts with "d"	Starts with "c"	Starts with "s"	Starts with a vowel	Starts with "h"
design	code	stand	area	hemispheric
draft	continuum	succinct	introspective	hypothesize
deduce	conflict	speculate	enforcement	hyperbolic
denominator	complimentary	spectator		
denouement	commitment	stoic		
define				
devise				

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## Extensions

- Take the same set of words and have student/s try to sort them into completely DIFFERENT groups.

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## Re-Sort

Words with Multiple Meanings	Words that include "ment"	Words that include "spec"	Words that include prefix "de-"	Math/Geometry Words
design	denouement	introspective	devise	hypothesize
draft	commitment	perspective	deduce	complimentary
area	enforcement	speculate	define	continuum
conflict	complimentary	spectator		congruent
concrete	implement			denominator
code				hemispheric

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## Extensions (cont)

- Give the words to the student(s) in pre-sorted groups and have the student(s) try to figure out an appropriate label for each.
- Students sort into groups. However, rather than labeling the groups, they challenge another student or group to figure out the sorting scheme(s).

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?	?	?	?
devise	continuum	code	area
design	introspective	draft	speculate
deduce	hypothesize	writ	denouement
conflict	hyperbolic		implement
define	hemispheric		perspective
succinct	spectator		commitment
stoic			enforcement

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<b>2 syllables</b>	<b>4 syllables</b>	<b>1 syllable</b>	<b>3 syllables</b>
devise	continuum	code	area
design	introspective	draft	speculate
deduce	hypothesize	writ	denouement
conflict	hyperbolic		implement
define	hemispheric		perspective
succinct	spectator		commitment
stoic			enforcement

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### DUMP AND CLUMP

(individual Activity)



THE DUMPSTER – All the words related to the topic you are studying (or some other parameter).

THE CLUMPSTER – Pull words out of the dumpster and clump them into categories . Assign labels to each category and write a sentence describing each.


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# PLAY WITH WORDS

To build word-conscious  
students!

Fosters Broad and Deep  
Vocabulary Knowledge

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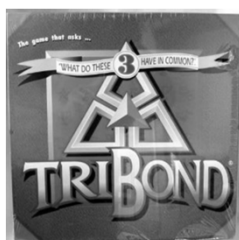
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A group of  
three words  
that have a  
single trait  
in common

## “Commonyms”

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## Try These!

- Chair, Bed, Sofa
- Baseball player, soda bottle, mushroom
- Baseball, cave, cricket
- Coral, Corn, Ribbon
- Salt, sea, Ice
- Radio, Car Engine, Piano
- Jungle, car show room, Jacksonville, FL

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### Harder Tribonds

- Nucleus, Sun, Caramel
- Plasma, Money, Gossip
- Trachea, larynx, epiglottis
- Florist, Furniture Store, Obstetrician
- Asphalt, Bread, Paint
- Long, Short, Flat

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### Hink-Pinks

Two-Word Rhyming Word Puzzles  
Foster Broad and Deep Vocabulary

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### Try Some Hink-Pinks!

- Move, Female Deer \_\_\_\_\_
- 24 hours with toys \_\_\_\_\_
- 50% giggle \_\_\_\_\_
- A totally cool father \_\_\_\_\_
- A blue-green moray \_\_\_\_\_
- A cloudy 24 hours \_\_\_\_\_

[www.wuzzlesandpuzzles.com](http://www.wuzzlesandpuzzles.com)

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### Hinkie-Pinkies (2 syllable Hink-Pinks))

- More melancholy scaffold
- Shinguard and ball storage unit
- More soggy knit

### Hinkity-Pinkities (3 syllables)

- Creepy pastor
- Leader's home

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### Academic Hink Pinks

- A calm substance that yields hydrogen when dissolved in water.
- A segment of a circle green space
- A 3-dimensional surface with equidistance points for an antlered mammal
- A slogan for a small cave

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Find Commonyms and Hink-Pinks at:

[www.wuzzlesandpuzzles.com](http://www.wuzzlesandpuzzles.com)

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## Scattergories

	CHEMISTRY	WW2	CELL BIOLOGY
M	Magnesium	Mussolini	Mitochondria
C	Covalent Bond	Communism	Cytoplasm
P	Pipette	Pearl Harbor	Protein
O	Organic Compound	Okinawa	Organelle
N	Neon	Normandy	Nucleus
R	Reagent	Rationing	Ribonucleic Acid

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## YOUR TURN!

	Audiology	Tropical fruits & Nuts
C	Cochlea, Concha, Compression, Crusk cilia, cerumen	Carambola, Custard apple, Cara Cara, Clementines, Coconut, Cashews, Carob
A	Amplifier, Aditus, Antihelix, Art of Corti, Aural Rehab	Acai, Avacado, Almonds
B	Basilar membrane, Bone conduction	Banana, Buddha's hand, Blood orange, Breadfruit, Brazil nuts
T	Tectorial membrane, Tensor tympani, Tragus, tympanic membrane	Tamarind, tangerine,
D	Decibel, dB, Decussation	Dates, Dragonfruit
P	Pars tensa, Period, Pinna, Pure Tone, Pars Flaccida, Perilymph	Papaya, Passion fruit, Pomegranate, Pineapple, Plantain, Pecans

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	Audiology	Tropical fruits & Nuts
C	Cochlea, Concha, Compression, Crusk cilia, cerumen	Carambola, Custard apple, Cara Cara, Clementines, Coconut, Cashews, Carob
A	Amplifier, Aditus, Antihelix, Art of Corti, Aural Rehab	Acai, Avacado, Almonds
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P	Pars tensa, Period, Pinna, Pure Tone, Pars Flaccida, Perilymph	Papaya, Passion fruit, Pomegranate, Pineapple, Plantain, Pecans

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## Taboo

- Students create cards from current topics of study.
- Goal is to try to get your partner or team to say the word WITHOUT using any of the words on the card as clues.

World War II
The Greatest Generation
Hiroshima
Pearl Harbor
Rationing
Veterans

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## Other Vocabulary-Building Games

- Pictionary
- Twenty Questions
- Jeopardy
  - Boards can be created for free (no registration) at <https://jeopardylabs.com>

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<https://jeopardylabs.com>

Water Cycle	Clouds	Weather Vocabulary	Stormy Weather	Tornado Safety and Trivia
100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400
Team 1 Team 2 Team 3 0 0 0 1 1 1				

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### Cinquains

- Five line, non-rhyming poems that specify how particular types of words are used to create a theme.
- Facilitates word consciousness through active learning
- Requires that students hold both broad and deep knowledge of vocabulary
- Appropriate for students aged 7 and older

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### Cinquain

- Line 1: One word (noun) which names topic
- Line 2 – Two words (adjectives) which describe topic
- Line 3 – Three words to express action of noun (verbs)
- Line 4 – Four words to express feelings or make an observation
- Line 5 – Repeat topic, or one word that sums it up or is a synonym

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### Template

- Noun \_\_\_\_\_
- Adjectives \_\_\_\_\_
- Verbs \_\_\_\_\_
- Feelings or observations \_\_\_\_\_
- Repeat or re-state noun \_\_\_\_\_

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Horses  
Beautiful, Noble  
Running, Jumping, Inspiring  
Riding into the sunset  
Friends

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SUPERCHARGED CINQUAINS  
(Academic Vocabulary)

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Blood  
Leukocytes, Plasma  
Circulating, Oxygenating, Clotting  
Regulates the Body's Temperature  
Hemoglobin

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<p>Lung Disease COPD, Emphysema Gasping, Heaving, Coughing Alveoli damaged from smoking Pleurisy</p>
<p>Soil Terra firma Nurturing, composting, weathering More than just dirt Home</p>

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<p>Soil Terra firma Nurturing, composting, weathering More than just dirt Home</p>
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<p><b>Research-Based Intervention Strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Effective vocabulary instruction does not rely on definitions.</li> <li>2. Teaching word parts enhances learning.</li> <li>3. Students must represent their knowledge of words in both linguistic and non-linguistic ways.</li> <li>4. Active engagement and visual imagery improves learning.</li> <li>5. Playing with words is an effective way to help students become more word conscious.</li> <li>6. Repeated exposure is essential.</li> </ol>
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## ACTION PLAN!



- Pick one or two strategies (or even three!) that you will try in the next week. You may also choose to note a particular student for whom you think the strategy might be particularly effective.
- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- Building Word Conscious students is an important part of vocabulary instruction, so don't forget to add activities that help students become more aware of words and their power as well as strategies that target specific words.

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## Recommended References

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- Beck, I and McKeown, L. (2013). Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction.
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- McKeown, M.G. (1991). Learning Word Meanings from Definitions: Problems and Potential. In P. Pshwanenflugel (Ed). The Psychology of Word Meanings. Hillsdale, NJ : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Beck, I. Perfetti, C. & McKeown, M. (1982). Effects of long-term vocabulary instruction on lexical access and reading comprehension

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