



Vocabulary Assessment and Teaching Vocabulary After Reading

More new words and phrases can be taught after reading. There are several instructional strategies that follow naturally after reading, such as students formulating questions, using cognitive maps, team presentations, a variety of cooperative learning strategies, and of course short and long pieces of writing to anchor vocabulary, discourse, and content. Learning centers or stations can also be designed for after-reading vocabulary with more words, grammar, discourse, and reading and writing activities.

SOME AFTER-READING VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

1. **Formulating Questions.** After Partner Reading, instead of answering teacher-made questions or text questions, the students form teams of four to formulate questions from the portion of the text they have been reading using Tier 2 and Tier 3 words and phrases. Formulating instead of just answering questions develops further depth of meaning. Students need to go back into the text to do more close reading and learn more vocabulary. Using sample

question starters from Bloom's Taxonomy (see <http://teaching.uncc.edu/learning-resources/articles-books/best-practice/goals-objectives/writing-objectives>), students in teams can jointly formulate two questions at the Bloom level the teacher has assigned. This gives the students additional opportunities to use the pre-taught words as well as to learn new words as they formulate questions. It is also an opportunity to go back into the text and delve deeper into comprehension of the topic.

2. Assessing the Questions and the Content. The questions students develop are collected by the teacher, and a cooperative learning activity can be used for the whole class to answer or discuss the questions written by each team. This helps to anchor language, discourse, reading comprehension, writing skills, and mastery of content. High-quality, text-dependent questioning by students leads to reformulation of assumptions, clarification of information, or prediction of possible outcomes.

One strategy we used when we were conducting Multidistrict Trainer of Trainers Institutes in each of the California Counties of Education years ago, our presenters used a strategy to ensure that all students were totally engaged in learning. This strategy has been called Numbered Heads Together (Calderón, 1984; Calderón & Spiegel-Coleman, 1985) but has been modified throughout the years to help ELLs and SELs apply the new words within the context of close reading and reporting what they learn (Calderón et al., 2011–2016).

Numbered Heads Together

- (1) Number off in your teams from one to four.
- (2) Listen to the question.
- (3) Put your heads together, and come up with the answer.
- (4) Make sure every student knows the answer, particularly your ELL peer.
- (5) Be prepared if your number is called.
- (6) The team that wrote the question becomes the judges of the vocabulary used during responses.
- (7) Use sentence starters, connectors, and Tier 2 and 3 words in your response and when you add to someone else's responses.

3. **Center Activities.** Elementary teachers like to prepare activities for students to work individually or in pairs at classroom centers. It is critically important that the center activities take place after students have read, not before. At centers, students can (1) write the words, meanings, and sentences in their journals, logs, or personal dictionaries; (2) study spelling with a buddy; (3) use a computer, iPad, or tablet to practice pronunciation; (4) use a dictionary or thesaurus to further explore these words; (5) do grammar mini lessons on sentence combining, tense, or punctuation that students can use for their forthcoming drafting, revising, and editing text-based writing.

4. **Short and Long Pieces of Writing.** Initially, students write their own individual summaries or a couple of sentences on exit tickets or work on a team writing assignment. They use various strategies to revise and edit their writing before handing it in to the teacher or presenting it in class. This is the time to teach more vocabulary to students. They will need more connectors, transition words, and words for elaborating their sentences. Subsequently, they begin writing longer summaries, compositions, and reports. By now, they have used the five or six pre-taught words at least 40 times, and they own them. There is no reason to reteach any of those words. They have mastered them while reading and summarizing, formulating questions, answering questions, and doing various types of writing during all these follow-up activities.

5. **Higher-Level Discourse.** ELLs and SELs can keep up with a challenging task and pace when they experience the type of instruction described in components 1 to 7 from “Integrating Vocabulary Into Reading and Writing” in Chapter 5. They can also participate in higher-level discourse activities such as listening, repeating what proficient students are saying, and contributing with at least brief sentences. These are some of the activities in which they can participate at a modified level when provided with lists of words they can use:

- (1) Oral debates or argumentative speech, where students are required to prepare background, details, positions, citations, cohesive arguments, and conclusions
- (2) Oral speeches where students need to present information in a limited time frame in performances that require a beginning, middle, and end and are given cognitive maps

- (3) Oral presentations of key information requiring students to know key facts and are given criteria and rubrics to read the audience, protocols to be aware of time and tone, and specific relevant vocabulary to use
- (4) Oral interviews for jobs, scholarships, internships, or other situations, where students need to convince the audience of their skills and potential
- (5) Sales and marketing advertising, where students need to sell both the merits of a product or service and their personal expertise with and knowledge of it
- (6) Understanding, acknowledging, or presenting various points of view; for example, during a crime investigation, a student may be asked to play a police officer, attorney, clergy, witness, teacher, counselor, TV reporter, parent, friend, or other stakeholder.
- (7) Oral variations and vocabulary needed for representing a specific profession in a technical or professional manner, such as a theater actor, a poet, a police officer, a painter, an architect, an athlete, a scientist, or a university professor (adapted from CCSS).

Assessing Vocabulary Mastery

There are several steps along the lesson path to assess the progress and mastery of vocabulary.

First, the objectives and expectations need to be set in a way that one can return and assess what has been accomplished. For example, after students read a book such as *I Can Stay Calm* or *Don't Give Up* and the vocabulary includes words such as *resiliency*, the objectives can be as follows:

Content Objectives—Use evidence from the text to do the following:

- Identify statements about resiliency made by the author.
- Determine and explain what evidence the author used to support these statements or claims.
- Determine the connections to our lives.
- Describe cause-and-effect relationships explained by the author.

Language Objectives—Acquire and use new vocabulary sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

- Reading: Determine main idea and provide summary of the text using Tier 2 and Tier 3 words. Identify and justify the claims made by the author.
- Listening and Speaking: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.
- Writing: Develop and strengthen writing by collaborating in drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, and sharing a final product.

Second, the assessments occur during the listening, speaking, reading, and writing events. The assessments can take several forms:

- (1) Scripting individual performance and keeping those narratives in the student's folders or portfolios
- (2) Using a checklist (meets expectation, in progress, or not performed) that looks at how many and how well Tier 2 and Tier 3 words are being used in the following activities:
 - (a) Vocabulary Step 6 (five adequate examples of each word taught)
 - (b) Partner Reading verbal summaries after each paragraph
 - (c) Words and sentences in exit or entry passes or tickets
 - (d) Question formulation and question responses during Numbered Heads Together
 - (e) Class discussions on *resiliency*
 - (f) Cooperative learning discourse activities using former and current vocabulary
 - (g) Collaborative writing that includes the teacher's criteria for assessing the writing in addition to the appropriate use of connectors, transition words, and new vocabulary—the criteria must be as explicit as possible; for instance, the writer must accomplish the following:
 - Establish a context, introduce a narrator or characters, and organize an event sequence.

- Employ narrative techniques such as dialogue, description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- Use a variety of transition words to convey sequence and signal shifts.
- Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language.
- Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Third, inform the students how you will measure each—how many points per each criteria met.

Fourth, use a grid to keep on hand as a reminder. The two tables that follow are examples of ways teachers plan their assessments.

Learning Objectives	ExC-ELL Observation Protocol™ (EOP®) Assessment Checklist
Listening and Speaking: Engage in a variety of collaborative discussions with diverse partners based on a common text. Build on others' ideas, and express one's own ideas clearly in complete sentences.	Listening and Speaking: Use teacher documentation of oral summaries during partner reading, question formulation, and responses during Numbered Heads Together.
Writing: Write a narrative to develop imagined experiences or events using descriptive details, dialogue, and clear event sequences.	Writing: Use data from daily or weekly exit passes, written summaries, and independent writing. Note: Use story and paragraph frames or other aids to differentiate for students who need support.

SUMMARY

Vocabulary is to be integrated throughout a lesson. Some words and phrases can be taught before (1) students read, (2) listen to a teacher's presentation of content, (3) observe and listen to an experiment, (4) watch a video, or (5) listen to a teacher read a storybook aloud to them—so that the students are not totally lost. Yet, the most effective way to master those words is through repetitive almost redundant use during reading, discussions, and writing.

The Common Core State Standards call for delving deeply into word knowledge in the process of close reading and text-based writing. Hence, vocabulary should be selected from the texts students are about to read and reinforced through reading them in context, using the words as they read to summarize verbally, answer and formulate questions, and compose different types of writing in all the subject areas. The way we speak, read, and write in language arts is very different from the way we do that in math, science, social studies, and several other subjects. When ELLs and SELs in elementary schools learn how to use 3,000 to 5,000 words per year in all subjects combined, secondary schools will not experience so many long-term ELLs. When ELLs and SELs master at least five words per subject per day in their secondary schools, they will be career and college ready. Hence, it behooves all educators in a school to embrace vocabulary instruction as a critical foundation for all content areas.