



M5 VOCABULARY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Companion Document

“Conversations are most effective at building vocabulary if they’re extended and contingent, meaning that adults are actively recruiting and carefully scaffolding children’s talk about new words and ideas” (Wasik & Hindman, 2015, p. 51).

When teachers use sophisticated words in the classroom, learners can connect new words to familiar words, and vocabulary learning increases (Beck et al., 2014).

This companion document is one in a series of six companion documents complimenting the Building Blocks of Reading Continuum. The companion documents provide an overview of research pertaining to reading instruction and the building blocks of reading:

- Research and Reading Instruction
- Phonological Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Reading Comprehension



Vocabulary and the Building Blocks of Reading



Vocabulary knowledge is widely accepted as one of the leading predictors of success in learning to read (Bowne et al., 2017; Wanzek, 2014; National Reading Panel, 2000). Plenty of research exists relating to a learner’s vocabulary acquisition, while research in effective vocabulary instruction continues to mature (National Reading Panel, 2000; Wanzek, 2014). The size and richness of a learner’s vocabulary, as well as the speed of accessing word meanings from memory, are strong indicators of both reading comprehension and overall academic success (Lane et al., 2010).

Vocabulary instruction is integral to learner success in reading. There are two types of vocabulary—oral vocabulary and print vocabulary. A reader who encounters an unfamiliar word in print decodes the word first. “If it is in the reader’s oral vocabulary, the reader will be able to understand it. If the word is not in the reader’s oral vocabulary, the reader will have to determine the meaning by other means, if possible” (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 4–3). Thus, as a learner’s vocabulary (either oral or print) grows, as does the likelihood they will be able to make sense of printed text. In other words, the more words a learner knows, the easier it is to learn new ones and to understand printed text (Weitzman, & Greenberg, 2002).

Someone who knows a lot about horses may develop an awareness of many horse-related words (e.g., saddle, bridle, fetlock, hoof, bit, palomino, sorrel, spavin, mane, yearling), but they also will usually know many kinds of other related information (e.g., animal behaviour; how to care for pets; what stables, barns, and corrals are like). However valuable the individual words may be, an understanding of them usually includes more than simple dictionary definitions.

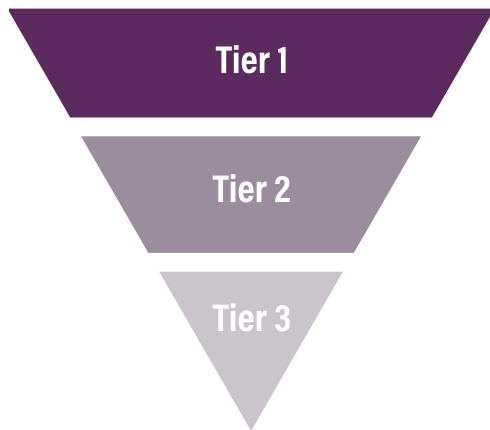
Oral vocabulary knowledge can be conceptualized into two representations:

- *Breadth* (the number of words known)
- *Depth* (knowledge of word meanings) (Ouellette, 2006)

It is important to remember that vocabulary is a necessary skillset on the Building Blocks of Reading Continuum, but it does not work in isolation and must be taught alongside other building block skill areas at a rate appropriate for each learner’s development. Promising research findings indicate vocabulary learning can result from the explicit and direct instruction of vocabulary, “wherein the teacher intentionally focusses instruction on developing students’ knowledge of word meaning by targeting specific words” (Wanzek, 2014, p. 140). Additionally, “there is no disagreement about the idea that children learn many words without any obvious formal instruction. Incidental learning of vocabulary—from language interactions with others, media, reading, and so on—is both obvious and impressive” (Shanahan, 2005, p. 23). That is, vocabulary skills and knowledge can be strengthened both directly and indirectly through intentional instructional practice and rich language experiences, respectively.

Tiers of Vocabulary

As illustrated below, Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) define levels of vocabulary based on their utility. Levels of vocabulary utility include: Tier One (common words), Tier Two (all-purpose words), and Tier Three (specific, content-area words). While Tier One words are often absorbed indirectly through rich language experiences and exposure (e.g., hop, love, me, like), Tier Two words typically require direct teaching as learners are less likely to encounter them indirectly (e.g., bravery, empathy, purpose). Tier Three words also require direct teaching and should be introduced when developmentally appropriate to do so (e.g., photosynthesis, citizenship, atmosphere) (Dashiell & Debruin-Padrecki, 2014).



Tier One Vocabulary are common words which rarely need explanation as they are heard and used often (e.g., run, tell, garage, lamp).

Tier Two Vocabulary are all-purpose words that are functional and critical for comprehension (e.g., powerful, virtue, purchase).

Tier Three Vocabulary are more complex, domain specific words (e.g., femur, isotope, reptile, hypotenuse).

Response to Intervention (RTI) also has three tiers. The three tiers of vocabulary classify functions and difficulty of words, while RTI provides a framework for instructional practices and interventions.



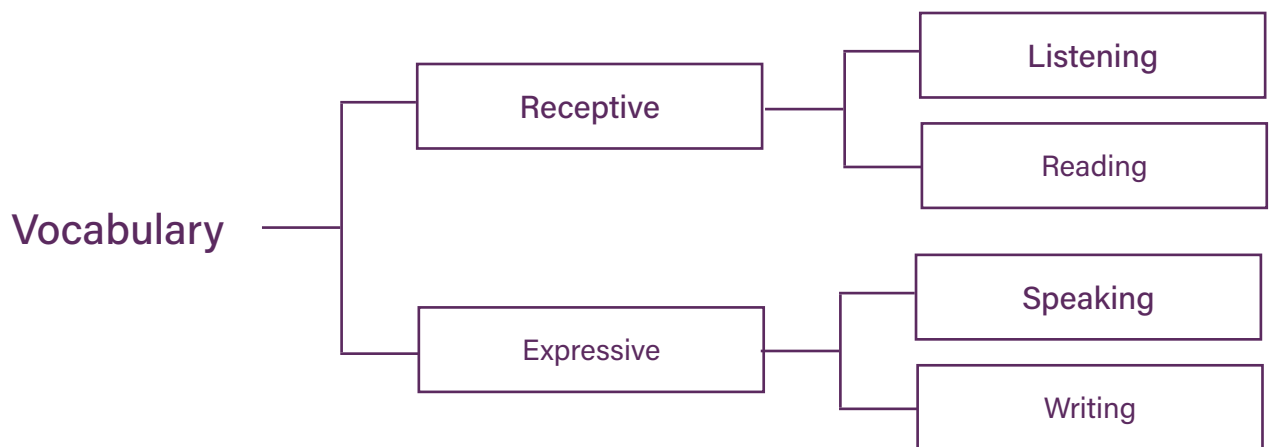
Supporting Vocabulary Skills and Knowledge Development



Vocabulary knowledge can be classified as either receptive or expressive and can be taught indirectly and directly. While receptive vocabulary includes words an individual understands after hearing or identifying them in print, expressive vocabulary includes words an individual is able to retrieve and use in speaking and writing.

Receptive and expressive vocabulary development can be supported either:

- indirectly by encouraging reciprocal conversation, through oral language practice, reading to learners and having them read often.
- directly by teaching words explicitly, using word learning strategies, and becoming more word conscious.



It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of maximizing a learner's exposure to vocabulary words. Selecting words for instruction that are more sophisticated in place of familiar concepts and words expands both vocabulary breadth and depth (Lane et al., 2010; Beck et al., 2014).

Vocabulary Skills and Knowledge in the Classroom



Of importance, is how indirect and direct teaching of vocabulary can positively impact the breadth and depth of a learner's vocabulary. Subsequently, increased vocabulary knowledge can positively impact reading achievement overall (Ouellette, 2006). Reading "involves decoding, visual word recognition, and comprehension, and oral vocabulary includes breadth and depth of knowledge," therefore, Ouellette (2006) suggests both the number of words a learner knows and the depth of word meanings as critical to reading skill instruction.

Research suggests vocabulary knowledge varies greatly among learners (Ouellette, 2006; Waskis & Hyndman, 2015; Golinkiff et al., 2019). Wasik and Hyndman (2015) refer to a receptive vocabulary "word gap," stating a gigantic range in vocabulary knowledge among learners who have had great exposure to spoken language and those who have had minimal. That is, it is entirely plausible for two learners of the same age and developmental ability to have had vastly different experiences and vocabulary exposure.

Effective Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary knowledge can be strengthened through engaging activities rooted in research findings. Julie Dashiell and Adrea DeBruin-Parecki (2014) suggest using an approach to vocabulary instruction called F.R.I.E.N.D.S. "designed to help teachers bridge the vocabulary gap for those students who are most at risk" (p. 513).

The F.R.I.E.N.D.S. model outlines seven instructional recommendations integral to the growth of vocabulary breadth and depth:

- **F**ostering quality reciprocal conversations
- **R**obust and intriguing instruction
- **I**nteractive read-alouds
- **E**ngaging and literacy-positive learning environments
- **N**umerous opportunities for practice of new vocabulary
- **D**irect and explicit teaching of vocabulary and its usage
- **S**ophisticated and rare words (Dashiell & DeBruin-Parecki, 2014)

As with the other Building Blocks of Reading skill areas, the scope and sequence of vocabulary outcomes can be found on the Building Blocks of Reading Continuum, organized by developmental phase progression.

Phases of Word Learning

Linea Ehri, an educational researcher, proposed the phases of word learning in 1995. This widely recognized theory helps us to understand the phases learners move through towards proficient reading. Each phase is characterized by a learner's understanding and use of the alphabetic system in their word reading. Phases range from pre-alphabetic, to partial alphabetic, to full alphabetic, to consolidated alphabetic, to skilled reader.

Next we will examine each of the developmental phases of word learning, phase outcomes, and suggested learning activities.

Pre-alphabetic to Partial Alphabetic Phase: Vocabulary



Teaching Goal:

To develop vocabulary knowledge of Tier One words to progress learners to the partial alphabetic phase.

End Outcomes

- Knows and uses some Tier One words
- Knows and uses a variety of describing words
- Knows word relationships including synonyms and opposites
- Knows and uses words for kinship terms
- Starts using story vocabulary
- Provides the appropriate vocabulary to complete a phrase/sentence
- Knows question words
- Begins to use words over nonverbal actions to resolve conflicts

Checklist of Teaching “Must Haves”

- Reciprocal communication (speaking, listening, and responding)
- Discussions (sharing comments and asking questions)
- Oral reflections (sharing feedback)
- Descriptive activities (show and tell, guessing games, etc.)

Activities to Encourage End of Phase Outcomes

Suggested learning activities for the pre-alphabetic to partial alphabetic phase are described below.

Outcome: Knows and uses some Tier One words

Activity: Let's Chat

Educators can enhance a learner's vocabulary simply by engaging in conversation regularly and with intention. To facilitate reciprocal (back and forth) conversation, educators can do the following:

- Arrange time during the school day where students are expected to sit in small groups and take turns asking questions and answering questions regarding a specific topic.
 - Invite students at the beginning or end of the school day to sit in a circle and discuss the day's activities (e.g., "What did we learn about today? How did it make you feel? Did it interest you? Why or why not?").
 - Point out common courtesies, turn taking, manners, and social queues (e.g., "Why should we take turns when speaking? How do we ask questions without hurting feelings? What does listening look like?").
 - Encourage discussion topics including Tier One words categorized by colours (e.g., red, blue, green), shapes (e.g., circle, triangle, square), concepts for size (e.g., big/small) and location (e.g., over, under) (Upper Grand District School Board, 2001).
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Outcome: Knows and uses a variety of describing words

Activity: "I Spy" Something that is Sticky!

While pointing out various objects in the classroom, discuss describing words with learners. Name the object and ask learners to use one word to describe it. After practicing, have students play "I Spy" using all sorts of describing words: "I spy with my little eye, something that is tiny!"

Outcome: Knows word relationships including synonyms and opposites

Activity: Similar and Different

1. Draw a large house on chart paper.
2. Write synonyms and opposites in pairs around the house. (See Appendix A for a black line master word list.)

3. Go through the word pairs (including meanings) and ask students to identify if the word pairs have similar meanings (synonyms) or opposite meanings (antonyms).
4. Write down the synonym pairs inside the house and the opposite pairs outside of the house.
5. To extend learning, have learners create new word pairs that are synonyms (with similar meanings) or antonyms (opposites).

Outcome: Knows and uses words for kinship terms

Activity: Read aloud

- Select texts that exemplify diverse and varied family dynamics.
- Model and think aloud while drawing attention to kinship words (e.g., sister, step-brother, aunt, cousin, grandmother, etc.), graphics, and text.
- Discuss examples of kinship with learners, and ask those who are comfortable to share an example of a kinship relationship or an experience (e.g., "Does anyone have a brother or a sister? Would you like to tell us about it? Does anyone know if their caregivers have brothers or sisters? Do you have a special name for them?").

Outcome: Starts using story vocabulary

Activity: Stories, Fables, and Fairy Tales!

Introduce oral stories, fables, and fairy tales that have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Draw attention to common elements such as usage of "once-upon-a-time" and "happily-ever-after."

Point out lessons or morals, and the distinction between true stories or stories that are make-believe (non-fiction and fiction) (e.g., "Do you think the story of Aladdin is a true story or a make-believe story? Are genies real? How do you know?").

Outcome: Provides the appropriate vocabulary to complete a phrase/sentence

Activity: Role Playing

Use classroom objects to role play interactions with learners. Ask them to fill in the missing word. For example, with a pencil in hand, ask "Would you like to borrow my _____?"

Encourage learners to provide the missing word(s) and to explain how they know which word fits and which doesn't (e.g., "How did you know I was going to say pencil? What if I said lawnmower? Why doesn't lawnmower work? Where might I be if I was offering you my lawnmower?").

Outcome: Knows question words

Activity: What Do Animals Eat?

Learning to ask questions doesn't come naturally for some. Encourage learners to use "who," "what," "where," "when," "why," and "how" to help build knowledge of question words. Provide opportunities for question-forming practice by introducing whole class activities that encourage the use of question words.

1. Have one learner pick an animal and ask another learner, "What do squirrels eat?" The learner who provides the answer gets to pick an animal and ask another learner what that animal eats.
2. Repeat step 1 until everyone in the classroom has had a turn and understands the game. Introduce new question words (e.g. "Where do squirrels eat?") and new question content (e.g., "How do squirrels get their food?") to extend the activity.
3. Rotate through various categories of vocabulary to keep the game fresh and new (e.g., "Where do hockey players play? What shape is a window?").

Outcome: Begins to use words over nonverbal actions to resolve conflicts

Activity: Social Stories

During classroom discussions, introduce open-ended social stories involving simple conflicts.

For example:

"There once was a friend named Tyson, who really loved eating blueberries and yoghurt for snack. Tyson looked forward to his snack every day. He would often ask his teacher if it was time for recess even when he knew it wasn't time. One day, a friend bumped Tyson's hand just as he was about to open his snack container, and his blueberries flew UP in the air, and his yoghurt went EVERYWHERE. What a mess! Tyson was extremely frustrated and sad. He wouldn't have any snack at all."

1. Have learners think about the story and repeat it one more time asking the learners to consider how Tyson might respond with words, **not** actions.
2. Take turns sharing responses.
3. Ask learners to share if they have ever had a frustrating experience like Tyson's and how they handled it.
4. Extend the learning by asking learners to partner up and create their own stories about friends who have felt frustrated, sad, discouraged, or hopeless.

Partial Alphabetic to Full Alphabetic Phase: Vocabulary



Teaching Goal:

To develop vocabulary knowledge by building on knowledge of Tier One words and word curiosity to progress learners to the full alphabetic phase.

End Outcomes

- Sorts common objects into categories
- Understands and uses words for sequence, time, and spatial concepts for following and giving instructions
- Uses new words to describe everyday events and experiences
- Understands shades of meaning among verbs such as “stomp” and “march”
- Shows curiosity about word meanings
- Uses prior knowledge/experiences to make obvious predictions and talk about “what will happen next”
- Begins to identify new meanings for familiar words
- Uses the vocabulary of feelings

Checklist of Teaching “Must Haves”

- Reciprocal communication (speaking, listening, and responding)
- Discussions (sharing comments and asking questions)
- Oral reflections (sharing feedback)
- Descriptive activities (Repeat after Me, Simon Says, Guess What I’m Feeling?, multi-step instructions, etc.)
- Varied texts (informational, authentic, decodable, leveled, etc.)

Activities to Encourage End of Phase Outcomes

Suggested learning activities for the partial alphabetic to full alphabetic phase are described below.

Outcome: Sorts common objects into categories

Activity: Word Sort

Have learners identify and sort familiar objects inside and outside of the classroom.

1. Begin with inside the classroom. Have learners identify objects in plain sight, write the words down on cue cards for use later.
2. Prompt learners to identify an area outside of the classroom (e.g., playground, backyard, home, etc.). Have learners identify objects they can think of that might be found in the identified area and write them down on cue cards.
3. Draw two buckets or boxes on the board, shuffle the cue cards and ask learners to help sort the words into the buckets (categories: inside and outside).
4. Repeat this activity, adding more categories to extend the learning.

Outcome: Understands and uses words for sequence, time, and spatial concepts for following and giving instructions

Activity: Simon Says 1, 2, 3

Have learners participate in activities involving multi-step instructions. Activities promoting instructional sequences can enable learners to follow single, double, and multi-step instructions using vocabulary specific to sequence (e.g., first, second, etc.), time (e.g., before, after, soon), and spatial sense (up, down, under, etc.).

Have learners line up or form a circle to play Simon Says. Begin with simple instructions and gradually increase the complexity as the game progresses, for example:

1. Simon says: first, touch your toes.
2. Simon says: first, touch your toes, second, stand up, and third, touch your head.
3. Simon says: first, touch your toes but before you touch your toes, touch your ears.

Activities are best utilized without elimination. If a learner does not demonstrate an ability to follow all instructions, rather than eliminate the learner (excluding them or having them sit down), adjust the instructions accordingly. It is important all learners experience some form of success to retain engagement and motivation to participate.

4. Simon says: first, touch your toes, after you touch your toes, jump two times, and then crouch down.
5. Continue the game introducing a range of instructions and vocabulary as developmentally appropriate.
6. Encourage the learners to take turns providing instructions as an extension of learning.

Outcome: Uses new words to describe everyday events and experiences

Activity: Speaking and Listening Partners

1. Write down the words speaking and listening on the board and ask learners to describe each word (e.g., "What does speaking mean? How would you describe speaking to a friend?").
2. Ask what speaking and listening looks like and what makes each different from each other. Model and discuss effective communication practices such as: turn taking, not interrupting, active listening, and questioning.
3. Jot down notes as learners share their thoughts.
4. Organize partners for learners to practice, with a focus on the strategies discussed above. Provide learners with topics or starter words (e.g., swimming, camping, soccer, gardening, fishing, etc.).
5. After learners have had an opportunity to speak and listen to one another, ask partners to share some of the words that were used. Write responses where everyone can see and discuss the meanings of each word with the group.

Outcome: Understands shades of meaning among verbs such as "stomp" and "march"

Outcome: Shows curiosity about word meanings

Activity: What's in a Word?

Introduce various Tier Two words. Select words that are both similar in meaning and also completely different (e.g., stomp, march, tip-toe, skip, etc.). Activate prior knowledge and provide opportunities for students to make connections.

1. Have learners think about what they already know about a word.
2. Say the word, and then have the students repeat it. Do this several times. Next, segment the word using an arm tap or other motor movement and blend.

3. Write the word down and practice saying it correctly as a group.
4. Explore the meaning of the word together and investigate associated words (e.g., gallop, meander, waltz, saunter, etc.).

Outcome: Uses prior knowledge/experiences to make obvious predictions and talk about “what will happen next”

Activity: I Predict...

Identify learners' areas of interest and collect a diverse array of materials on those topics for reading/discussion.

1. Activate prior knowledge by engaging learners in conversations that focus on ideas and information contained in the readings or discussion.
2. Encourage predictions and discussion about “what will happen next” and whether those predictions are reasonable or unreasonable (e.g., “If Sue is feeling sick, might she play soccer this evening? Why or why not? What makes you feel this way?”).

Outcome: Begins to identify new meanings for familiar words

Activity: Word Detective

Engage learners in a discussion about words and the meanings of words (e.g., “How do we know what words mean? What does happy mean? How do we know?”). Ask learners if words can have more than one meaning (e.g., “What is a bat? Is it an animal or something used in baseball? Can it be both?”). Share examples of words that might have at least one familiar meaning but might also have additional meanings not yet learned (e.g., pound, band, right, etc.).

Have learners act as detectives and investigate a word as a group. To extend the activity have learners explore familiar text in the classroom looking for an interesting word. Discuss the meaning and celebrate when new and interesting words are identified.

Encourage vocabulary growth in the following ways:

- Explore multiple meanings for a word (e.g., “The bark on the tree is rough.” or “The dogs bark very loudly.” or “We used chocolate and almonds to make almond bark.”).
- Encourage students to be word detectives (e.g., explore books with a magnifying glass to look for an interesting word).
- Create an environment where students feel eager to learn about new words and what they mean (e.g., celebrate when they bring a new word to your attention).

Outcome: Uses the vocabulary of feelings

Activity: Think Aloud for Expressions and Emotions

Read a familiar book with the learners. Select a text that involves a display of emotion in some way (e.g., Knuffle Bunny: Trixie is frustrated, sad, devastated, and happy, etc; The Lorax: the child is curious and concerned, the Lorax is frustrated, the Onceler is regretful). Pause as the text is read to ask learners to identify emotions or expressions (e.g., "How might the child feel now? What do you suppose is upsetting them? What do we call it when we are feeling sad and angry at the same time?").

Extend the learning by connecting the vocabulary introduced in text to experiences in the classroom (e.g., It's too bad we aren't able to finish our art projects. Are you feeling frustrated like Trixie was when she lost her Knuffle Bunny?).

Full Alphabetic to Consolidated Alphabetic Phase: Vocabulary



Teaching Goal:

To develop vocabulary knowledge of Tier Two and Tier Three words to progress learners to the consolidated alphabetic phase.

End Outcomes

- Defines words by category and by one or more key attributes, with support
- Understands and uses more advanced words for sequencing and spatial concepts
- Uses language to explain similarities and differences between objects
- Understands that root words can change meaning depending on the addition of a prefix and/or suffix
- Understands and uses some Tier Two and Tier Three words including curriculum specific vocabulary and more abstract words

Checklist of Teaching “Must Haves”

- Reciprocal communication (speaking, listening, and responding)
- Discussions (sharing comments and asking questions)
- Oral reflections (sharing feedback)
- Varied texts (informational, authentic, decodable, leveled, etc.)
- Word displays (word walls, word books, word cards)
- Class charts (word categories and associations, e.g., snow pants > snow > winter; bathing suit > sunshine > pool)
- Simple dictionaries

Activities to Encourage End of Phase Outcomes

Suggested learning activities for the full alphabetic to consolidated alphabetic phase are described below.

Outcome: Defines words by category and by one or more key attributes, with support

Activity: Word Sort

Extend the word sort activity listed in the partial alphabetic to full alphabetic phase to review vocabulary categorization and to introduce category attributes. Draw a square on the board or chart paper, and divide the square into sections.

1. Begin with a word category. Have learners identify words associated with a word category (e.g., nature—tree, leaf, butterfly, fish, sunshine, mushroom, bird, etc.).
2. Prompt learners to identify common attributes of words within their word list (e.g., “Aside from all being related to nature, do they have anything else in common?”).
3. Identify attributes by prompting learners with questions (e.g., “Which of these grow in the ground?”).
4. After identifying the first common attribute, ask learners if there are any other attributes the remaining words have in common (e.g., “Which of these are alive?” or “Which of these can fly?”).
5. Continue to sort words, identifying as many attributes as possible.
6. Extend the activity by asking a learner to identify a new category of words and repeat the process again.

Outcome: Understands and uses more advanced words for sequencing and spatial concepts

Activity: Multi-Step Instructions

Have learners participate in activities involving multi-step instructions. Activities promoting instructional sequences can enable learners to follow single, double, and multi-step instructions using vocabulary specific to sequence (e.g., first, second, etc.), time (e.g., before, after, soon), and spatial sense (up, down, under, etc.).

Engage learners with tactile experiences involving multiple steps where possible (e.g., building blocks, modelling clay, drawing step-by-step, origami, etc.). Use instructional manuals, video tutorials, or walk your students through each step by modelling (e.g., “Let’s make a crane by folding paper. We will follow each step together, one at a time.”).

After completing the activity, encourage learners to list each of the instructions involved in the activity. Write them down on the board and be sure to capture them all, even if the learners need a little help. After writing the instructions down, ask learners to complete the activity again in partners, using the instructions just listed.

Outcome: Uses language to explain similarities and differences between objects

Activity: Same or Different?

1. Introduce or review the definition of a noun. Give students three slips of paper. Ask students to write down three random nouns, one per slip of paper.
2. Collect all slips in a bowl or bag. (Consider adding a few nouns beforehand to ensure an interesting vocabulary selection.)
3. Next, pull out two random slips and lead the class through a sample round of associations. Look for all the ways that these two nouns are similar (e.g., car and clock). For sample words—car and clock—both start with the letter C, both are mechanical, people purchase both, both can be broken, both can stop working, both can be purchased at a store, etc.
4. Pair off learners and have each learner pull one slip of paper.
 - Have them look at the slip of paper and give each team time to create a list of all the ways the two nouns are similar (similarities can be captured orally or in print). If necessary, help them get started with similarities.
 - Have learners share their similarities and repeat the process for differences.
 - To extend the learning, ask learners to identify similarities and differences in addition to the listed words of other teams. (Neil, (n.d).)

Outcome: Understands that root words can change meaning depending on the addition of a prefix and/or suffix

Activity: Make it Explicit

1. Provide direct support and instruction for the decoding of sight words and morphemes (root words, prefixes, and suffixes).
2. Refer to the word in the context of the text.

3. Have students say the word.
4. Define the word in student-friendly language.
5. Provide other contexts that further explain the meaning. Children need to hear a word approximately 12–15 times before they “know” it and children who struggle to learn vocabulary need approximately 35 exposures to a new word in context over a five-day period to learn it.
6. Have students give examples of how the word might be used.
7. Provide students with other examples and have them decide whether the use of the word is appropriate given the context.
8. Have students think of related words to incorporate meaning (e.g. antonyms, synonyms, words in the same category, similarities/differences to other words).

Outcome: Understands and uses some Tier Two and Tier Three words including curriculum specific vocabulary and more abstract words

Activity: What's New?

1. Introduce the word:
 - Provide a visual representation for the target word(s).
 - Invite children to repeat target word(s) multiple times to ensure correct pronunciation and student engagement.
2. Define the word:
 - Provide a definition in child-friendly language, which works best if explanations are with Tier One words.
3. Illustrate the word with examples:
 - Give examples in a context that is familiar.
4. Check comprehension:
 - Employ partner work to ensure engagement.
 - Scaffold answers.

In addition to these four steps, good instructional pacing with wait times, developmentally appropriate lesson length, and summative activities should also be considered.



Build the Word.

Sun =

Cat =

Run =

Ten =

Fun =

Bat =

FOX =

Illustrations: sun, gold, rain, mail, fish, box, flower.

Direction: Draw a line to put 2 words together to make a compound word.

Date: _____ Name: _____

Build the Word.

Sun =

Cat =

Run =

Ten =

Fun =

Bat =

FOX =

Illustrations: sun, gold, rain, mail, fish, box.

Date: _____ Name: _____

Build the Word.

Sun =

Cat =

Run =

Ten =

Fun =

Bat =

FOX =

Illustrations: sun, gold, rain, mail, fish, box.

Date: _____ Name: _____

Consolidated Alphabetic to Skilled Reader Phase: Vocabulary



Teaching Goal:

To develop vocabulary knowledge of Tier Two and Tier Three words, use of literary techniques, classification of words, and known root words to progress learners to the skilled reader phase.

End Outcomes

- Classifies information into subcategories
- Replaces Tier One words with more sophisticated Tier Two and Tier Three words
- Uses literary techniques, such as similes, to enhance and enrich meaning
- Uses known root words as a clue to understand the meaning of a new word

Checklist of Teaching “Must Haves”

Consolidated alphabetic to skilled reader vocabulary instruction involves both vocabulary rich experiences and materials.

- Reciprocal communication (speaking, listening, and responding)
- Discussions (sharing comments and asking questions)
- Oral reflections (sharing feedback)
- Varied texts (informational, authentic, decodable, leveled, etc.)
- Word displays (word walls, word books, word cards)
- Class charts (word categories and subcategories, e.g., farm animals, forest animals, sea animals, animals that fly, animals that swim, etc.)
- Simple dictionaries
- Simple thesaurus
- Figurative language examples

Activities to Encourage End of Phase Outcomes

Suggested learning activities for the consolidated alphabetic to skilled reader phase are described below.

Outcome: Classifies information into subcategories

Activity: Word Sort

Extend the word sort activity listed in the full alphabetic to consolidated alphabetic phase to introduce subcategories. Draw a square on the board or chart paper and divide the square into sections.

1. Begin with a word category.
2. Have learners identify words associated with a word category (e.g., sports—hockey, skates, basketball, sneakers, shorts, run, jump, exercise).
3. Prompt learners to identify subcategories within their word list (e.g., “Aside from all being related to sports, do they have anything else in common?”).
4. Identify attributes by prompting learners with questions (e.g., “Which of these words are associated to hockey only?”).
5. After identifying the first subcategory, ask learners if there are any other subcategories that could be identified from the word list (e.g., “Which of these are types of sports?” or “Which of these words relates to physical activity? Are there words on this list you would only associate with winter sports?”).
6. Continue to sort words identifying as many subcategories as possible.
7. Extend the activity by asking a learner to identify a new category of words and repeat the process again.

Outcome: Replaces Tier One words with more precise and sophisticated Tier Two and Tier Three words

Activity: Review and Reinforce

Engage in a class discussion about any topic using the K-W-L (Know-Want-Learned) strategy. Review the material to be learned. Select several key terms/concepts and systematically describe how the term/concept is used within the context of the lesson.

K—what they KNOW about the topic

W—what they WANT to learn about the topic

L—coming back at the end of the lesson to report what they LEARNED about the topic (identify and review new vocabulary words)

This is a great way to involve your learners' caregivers who can support vocabulary growth at home. Select words that are critical to both oral and print vocabulary that also follow a theme relevant to classroom learning. This will help learners follow along in the classroom because some vocabulary will already be familiar to them (e.g., garden, growth, sprout, stem, compost, fertilizer, hydration, photosynthesis, etc.).

Outcome: Uses literary techniques such as similes to enhance and enrich meaning

Outcome: Uses known root words as a clue to understand the meaning of a new word

Extend the Make It Explicit activity detailed in the full alphabetic to consolidated alphabetic phase to expand upon using literary techniques and root words as a clue to understand meaning of unfamiliar words.

Activity: Make it Explicit

1. Provide direct support and instruction for the decoding of sight words and morphemes (root words, prefixes, and suffixes).
2. Identify root word variations with different prefixes and suffixes (e.g., unhappy, happiness, unhappiness, etc.).
3. Have students give examples of how the prefixes and suffixes might be used and how to identify the meaning according to the root word and prefixes/suffixes (e.g., determined, predetermined, undetermined, etc.).
4. Provide students with other examples and have them decide whether the use of the word is appropriate given the context ("Which is correct and why? The obstacle course route was predetermined and shared with participants." or "The obstacle course route was undetermined and shared with participants.").
5. Have students think of related words to incorporate meaning (e.g., antonyms, synonyms, words in the same category, similarities/differences to other words).
6. Identify figurative language opportunities to enhance meaning, including simile, metaphor, and other figurative techniques (e.g., "The obstacle course route was like a maze of mouse traps, and the participants were mice.").

Assessment of Vocabulary Skills and Knowledge



Screeners

The following vocabulary screener is intended to be used formatively to quickly assess a learner's vocabulary knowledge, as well as identify needs for targeted instruction. The screener below can be found in Appendix B.

The purpose of the indicators on the four checklists is two-fold:

- For comparison with the child's same-age peers
- For monitoring of progress from fall to winter to spring of the school year

Early Learners

Age range: ~3.5–4.5 years by September

Expected development: understands between 1200 and 2000 words and uses an average of between 800 and 1500 words.

Vocabulary Skill:	Fall	Winter	Spring
<p>Understands and uses early developing words for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> colours (e.g., red, blue, green) and shapes (e.g., circle, triangle, square). <input type="checkbox"/> size (e.g., big/small) and location (e.g., over, behind, around). <input type="checkbox"/> describes (e.g., basic: pretty, fast, loud AND/OR advanced: speedy, cozy, cheerful). <input type="checkbox"/> kinship terms (e.g., words for father, mother, sister). 			
<p>Understands "WH" question words (i.e., what, where, who, whose, why, how many, how, when. Note, these "WH" words appear in developmental order).</p>			
<p>This vocabulary skill continues to develop across grade levels and becomes increasingly a part of student's expressive language.</p>			
<p>Names 8–10 pictures of common objects and familiar actions.</p>			
<p>Understands word relationships (e.g., "A turtle is slow. A rabbit is _____.")</p>			
<p>Can supply the last word in a phrase/sentence (e.g., "When it is cold, we could wear a _____."). This ability is a precursor to using context clues for word meaning.</p>			

Kindergarten

Age range: ~4.5–5.5 years by September

Expected development: understands between 2500 and 2800 words and uses an average of between 1500 and 2000 words.

Vocabulary Skill:	Fall	Winter	Spring
Identifies new meanings for familiar words—beginning stages of multiple word meanings (e.g., “the bark on a tree” and “dogs bark”).			
Uses frequently occurring inflections (e.g., bump, bumpy), prefixes (e.g., disappear) and suffixes (e.g., peaceful).			
Transfers new words acquired from one context to another (e.g., uses vocabulary and ideas from books, fancy words or words of the week from classroom conversations, story retells and personal experiences).	This vocabulary skill continues to develop across all grade levels.		
Distinguishes shades of meaning among verbs, with support (e.g., walk, march, stomp).	This vocabulary skill continues to develop across all grade levels and expands to include adjectives and adverbs.		
Sorts common objects into categories with support (e.g., food versus clothing).			
Starts using story vocabulary (e.g., “Once upon a time” and “happily ever after”).			
Understands and uses words for:			
<input type="checkbox"/> spatial concepts for following and giving directions (e.g., under, in front, beside, between, first, last).			
<input type="checkbox"/> sequence (e.g., first, next, last) and time (e.g., today, tomorrow).			

M = meeting

NS = needs some support

NY = not yet meeting

Grade 1

Age range: ~5.5–6.5 years by September

Expected development: understands 13,000 words and uses an average of between 3000 and 5000 words.

Vocabulary Skill:	Fall	Winter	Spring
Uses sentence-level context as a clue to meaning.			
	This vocabulary skill continues to develop across all grade levels and increases in sophistication.		
With support:			
<input type="checkbox"/> sorts words into categories to gain a sense of the represented concept (e.g., pictures of “food” versus “toys”).			
<input type="checkbox"/> defines words by category and by one or more key attributes, with support (e.g. “snow pants” are clothing we wear when it is cold).			
Asks for word definitions or clarification (e.g., “What does ‘applause’ mean?”).			
Able to learn specific curricular vocabulary and more abstract words (e.g., Tier Two [e.g., “instructions”] and Tier Three vocabulary [e.g., “omnivore”]).			
Uses descriptive language (e.g., functions, part-whole relationships, associated actions). For example, “A cell phone can be used to call people. Like keys, it is one thing that people carry with them. We can also use it to take pictures.”			
Uses language to explain similarities and differences between objects (e.g., “You can eat an apple and an orange.” And “An apple is red and an orange is orange.”).			
Understands and uses words for:			
<input type="checkbox"/> time sequencing (e.g., second, third, before, after).			
<input type="checkbox"/> spatial concepts (e.g., left/right, above/below).			
Identifies common root words (e.g., unhealthy = <i>un</i> + health + <i>y</i>) and uses prefixes and suffixes as a clue to meaning (e.g., unsafe means “not safe” or “dangerous”).			

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Grade 2

Age range: ~6.5–7.5 years by September

Expected development: understands a minimum of 20,000 words and uses an average between 3000 and 8000 words.

Vocabulary Skill:	Fall	Winter	Spring
Uses a known root word (e.g., cycle) as a clue to the meaning of a new word with that root word (e.g., bicycle, tricycle, motorcycle).			
Uses knowledge of individual words to determine the meaning of a compound word (e.g., snowball is a ball you make out of snow).			
Infers the function of a new word from the context of a sentence: for example, the word is a noun (e.g., duck is a bird) or an action (e.g., duck under something).			
Classifies information into subcategories (e.g., cow, horse, pig are farm animals, while raccoon, fox, and bear are forest animals).			
Understands more abstract word meanings: synonyms, antonyms, multiple meanings, and puns (e.g., "Why do leopards have trouble hiding? They're always spotted!").			
Demonstrates early ability to paraphrase or restate information (as in a story retell or relaying a message) in student's own words.			
Replaces simple and routine oral vocabulary (Tier One) with words that are more curriculum-specific (Tier Two and Tier Three). For example, "diagram" versus "picture."			
Clarifies and explains words and ideas.			

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Appendix A:

Similar and Different

small

big

little

large

happy

sad

joyful

upset

start

end

begin

finish

easy

hard

simple

difficult

Appendix B:

Vocabulary Screener

Early Learners

Age range: ~3.5–4.5 years by September

Expected development: understands between 1200 and 2000 words and uses an average of between 800 and 1500 words.

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<p>Understands and uses early developing words for:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> colours (e.g., red, blue, green) and shapes (e.g., circle, triangle, square).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> size (e.g., big/small) and location (e.g., over, behind, around).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> describes (e.g., basic: pretty, fast, loud AND/OR advanced: speedy, cozy, cheerful).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> kinship terms (e.g., words for father, mother, sister).</p>			
<p>Understands “WH” question words (i.e., what, where, who, whose, why, how many, how, when. Note, these “WH” words appear in developmental order).</p>			
	<p>This vocabulary skill continues to develop across grade levels and becomes increasingly a part of student’s expressive language.</p>		
<p>Names 8–10 pictures of common objects and familiar actions.</p>			
<p>Understands word relationships (e.g., “A turtle is slow. A rabbit is _____.”)</p>			
<p>Can supply the last word in a phrase/sentence (e.g., “When it is cold, we could wear a _____.”). This ability is a precursor to using context clues for word meaning.</p>			

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Kindergarten

Age range: ~4.5–5.5 years by September

Expected development: understands between 2500 and 2800 words and uses an average of between 1500 and 2000 words.

Vocabulary Skill:	Fall	Winter	Spring
Identifies new meanings for familiar words—beginning stages of multiple word meanings (e.g., ‘the bark on a tree’ and “dogs bark”).			
Uses frequently occurring inflections (e.g., bump, bumpy), prefixes (e.g., disappear) and suffixes (e.g., peaceful).			
Transfers new words acquired from one context to another (e.g., uses vocabulary and ideas from books, fancy words or words of the week from classroom conversations, story retells and personal experiences).	This vocabulary skill continues to develop across all grade levels.		
Distinguishes shades of meaning among verbs, with support (e.g., walk, march, stomp).	This vocabulary skill continues to develop across all grade levels and expands to include adjectives and adverbs.		
Sorts common objects into categories with support (e.g., food versus clothing).			
Starts using story vocabulary (e.g., “Once upon a time” and “happily ever after”).			
Understands and uses words for:			
<input type="checkbox"/> spatial concepts for following and giving directions (e.g., under, in front, beside, between, first, last).			
<input type="checkbox"/> sequence (e.g., first, next, last) and time (e.g., today, tomorrow).			

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Grade 1

Age range: ~5.5–6.5 years by September

Expected development: understands 13,000 words and uses an average of between 3000 and 5000 words.

Vocabulary Skill:	Fall	Winter	Spring
Uses sentence-level context as a clue to meaning.			
	This vocabulary skill continues to develop across all grade levels and increases in sophistication.		
With support:			
<input type="checkbox"/> sorts words into categories to gain a sense of the represented concept (e.g., pictures of “food” versus “toys”).			
<input type="checkbox"/> defines words by category and by one or more key attributes, with support (e.g. “snow pants” are clothing we wear when it is cold).			
Asks for word definitions or clarification (e.g., “What does ‘applause’ mean?”).			
Able to learn specific curricular vocabulary and more abstract words (i.e., Tier Two [e.g., “instructions”] and Tier Three vocabulary [e.g., “omnivore”]).			
Uses descriptive language (e.g., functions, part-whole relationships, associated actions). For example, “A cell phone can be used to call people. Like keys, it is one thing that people carry with them. We can also use it to take pictures.”			
Uses language to explain similarities and differences between objects (e.g., “You can eat an apple and an orange.” And “An apple is red and an orange is orange.”).			
Understands and uses words for:			
<input type="checkbox"/> time sequencing (e.g., second, third, before, after).			
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Identifies common root words (e.g., unhealthy = <i>un</i> + health + <i>y</i>) and uses prefixes and suffixes as a clue to meaning (e.g., unsafe means “not safe” or “dangerous”).			

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Grade 2

Age range: ~6.5–7.5 years by September

Expected development: understands a minimum of 20,000 words and uses an average between 3000 and 8000 words.

Vocabulary Skill:	Fall	Winter	Spring
Uses a known root word (e.g., cycle) as a clue to the meaning of a new word with that root word (e.g., bicycle, tricycle, motorcycle).			
Uses knowledge of individual words to determine the meaning of a compound word (e.g., snowball is a ball you make out of snow).			
Infers the function of a new word from the context of a sentence: for example, the word is a noun (e.g., duck is a bird) or an action (e.g., duck under something).			
Classifies information into subcategories (e.g., cow, horse, pig are farm animals, while raccoon, fox, and bear are forest animals).			
Understands more abstract word meanings: synonyms, antonyms, multiple meanings, and puns (e.g., "Why do leopards have trouble hiding? They're always spotted!").			
Demonstrates early ability to paraphrase or restate information (as in a story retell or relaying a message) in student's own words.			
Replaces simple and routine oral vocabulary (Tier One) with words that are more curriculum-specific (Tier Two and Tier Three). For example, "diagram" versus "picture."			
Clarifies and explains words and ideas.			

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