

Fresno Unified School District



Building Academic Vocabulary

(Adapted from Building Academic Vocabulary
by Robert J. Marzano and Debra Pickering)

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Trustworthiness * *Respect* * *Responsibility* * *Fairness* * *Caring* * *Citizenship*

Vocabulary Instruction

Eight Characteristics of Effective Direct Vocabulary Instruction

1. Effective vocabulary instruction does not rely on definitions.
2. Students must represent their knowledge of words in linguistic and nonlinguistic ways.
3. Effective vocabulary instruction involves the gradual shaping of word meanings through multiple exposures.
4. Teaching word parts enhances student's understanding of terms.
5. Different types of words require different types of instruction.
6. *Students should discuss the terms they are learning.*
7. *Students should play with words.*
8. Instruction should focus on terms that have a high probability of enhancing academic success.

A Six-Step Process for Effective Vocabulary Instruction

- Step 1: The teacher provides a description, explanation, or example of the new term.
- Step 2: Students restate the explanation of the new term in their own words.
- Step 3: Students create a nonlinguistic representation of the term.
- Step 4: Periodically, students do activities that help them add to their knowledge of vocabulary terms.
- Step 5: Periodically, students are asked to discuss the terms with one another.
- Step 6: Periodically, students are involved in games that allow them to play with the terms.

Reference: Building Academic Vocabulary, Teacher's Manual by Robert J Marzano & Debra J. Pickering

Vocabulary Instruction Template

Below is a sample of a template for vocabulary instruction. Areas are noted with descriptions for use with students.

First, write the term, neatly and spelled correctly.

Next, describe what the term means. Don't copy a definition from the dictionary. Instead, try to describe the term as you would to a friend.

Term/Phrase:	My Understanding: 1 2 3 4	Subject:
Description:		
Drawing:	More ideas:	
	Definition:	

The next space is where you draw what you understand about the term. Drawing pictures is a good way to show what you know, even if you aren't very good a drawing. In fact, simple pictures sometimes work better than words at conveying meaning.

For older students, this space is for the 'student-worded' definition, **after** experiencing the vocabulary instruction process.

The blank space is here so you can add anything else that will help you understand the term. You might, for example, draw another picture, use the word in a sentence, write an antonym or synonym, or list other words that come to mind when you think about this term.

Knowledge Level	Description "My Understanding"
Level 4	I understand even more about the term than I was taught.
Level 3	I understand the term and I'm not confused about any part of what it means.
Level 2	I'm a little uncertain about what the term means, but I have a general idea.
Level 1	I'm very uncertain about the term,. I really don't understand what it means.

Subject:

Term / Phrase:

My Understanding: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Description:

Drawing:

More Ideas:

Recommended for Kindergarten.

Term/Phrase:	My Understanding: 1 2 3 4
Description:	Subject:
Drawing:	

Term/Phrase:	My Understanding: 1 2 3 4
Description:	Subject:
Drawing:	

Recommended for primary students.

Term/Phrase:	My Understanding: 1 2 3 4	Subject:
Description:		
Drawing:	More ideas:	
	Definition:	

Term/Phrase:	My Understanding: 1 2 3 4	Subject:
Description:		
Drawing:	More ideas:	
	Definition:	

Recommended for intermediate students.

Term/Phrase:	My Understanding: 1 2 3 4	Subject:
Description:		
Drawing:	More ideas:	

Term/Phrase:	My Understanding: 1 2 3 4	Subject:
Description:		
Drawing:	More ideas:	

Term/Phrase:	My Understanding: 1 2 3 4	Subject:
Description:		
Drawing:	More ideas:	

Term/Phrase:	My Understanding: 1 2 3 4	Subject:
Description:		
Drawing:	More ideas:	
	Definition: _____	

Term/Phrase:	My Understanding: 1 2 3 4	Subject:
Description:		
Drawing:	More ideas:	
	Definition: _____	

Term/Phrase:	My Understanding: 1 2 3 4	Subject:
Description:		
Drawing:	More ideas:	
	Definition: _____	



A SIX-STEP PROCESS FOR LEARNING VOCABULARY



Step 1: Provide a description, explanation, or example of the new term / phrase.

Step 2: Restate the explanation of the new term in your own words.

Step 3: Create a nonlinguistic representation of the term.

Step 4: Do activities that help gain knowledge of vocabulary term.

Step 5: Discuss the term with one another.

Step 6: Engage in games that allow ‘playing’ with the terms.