

Unit 2: Vocabulary Instructional Routines

Module 2: Pronouncing and Defining Words

TEXAS
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Vocabulary Instructional Routines



Module	Title
1	Selecting Words
2	Pronouncing and Defining Words
3	Generating Examples and Nonexamples

Objectives

- Understand characteristics of struggling middle school readers, the text types at this level, and the role of fluent and accurate reading at the secondary level.
- Recognize the importance of providing students with clear, understandable definitions for unfamiliar words.
- Identify or write student-friendly definitions for vocabulary words that will be taught in upcoming lessons.
- Apply an instructional routine to teach a strategy for pronouncing unfamiliar multisyllable words and providing student-friendly definitions.

Texts Above the Fifth Grade



- Collectively contain thousands of words that students have never encountered before
 - Most of the new words are longer, multisyllabic
 - These unfamiliar multisyllabic words tend to carry the weight of the content

The Importance of Quick and Accurate Word Recognition

- Fluent reading (quick, smooth, accurate reading) depends on recognizing many words immediately “at sight” and efficiently identifying unfamiliar words.

(Torgesen et al., 2003)

- Poorly developed word recognition skills, and a resulting lack of reading fluency, are among the greatest sources of reading challenges.

(Rasinski & Padak, 1998; Torgesen et al., 2003)

- Concentrating on identifying words reduces the amount of concentration that can be devoted to comprehension.

(National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Samuels, 2002)

The Importance of Quick and Accurate Word Recognition (cont.)

“About 28% of the variation in students’ achievement on the high school graduation test could be accounted for by variation in students’ reading fluency.”

(Rasinski et al., 2005, p. 25)

Making Definitions Useful to Students

- Looking up words in the dictionary is not effective for helping students learn new words.

(Scott & Nagy, 1997)

- Teaching students only formal definitions does not significantly or reliably improve comprehension.

(Baumann & Kame'enui, 1991; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986)

Making Definitions Useful to Students (cont.)

- It is more useful to explain the vocabulary words in simplified, natural English terms **before** a reading...

(Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002)

- ...and to use formal dictionary definitions **after** the word has been encountered in text.

(Nist & Olejnik, 1995)

Brief vs. Expanded Instructional Routine for Vocabulary

Brief Routine

1. Selecting the words to teach
2. Pronouncing and defining the words

Expanded Routine

1. Selecting the words to teach
2. Pronouncing and defining the words
3. Generating examples and nonexamples

Planning to Apply the Routine for Pronouncing Multisyllable Words

- Preview the text, looking for challenging words that students must know in order to comprehend the text.
- Select both academic and content-specific words that are:
 - New words not common to oral language
 - Mature or more precise labels for concepts already under the student's control
 - Abstract words and words not easily pictured
 - Words that require background knowledge for concept development
 - Multiple-meaning words
- Identify the word parts to prepare to pronounce multisyllable words.

Routine for Pronouncing and Defining Multisyllable Words, Part 1

- Write the word on the board with the syllables identified.
- Say the word with students:
 - Speak slowly, enunciating each syllable.
 - Stress each accented syllable.
- Repeat two or three times at a normal rate of speech.

Pronouncing and Defining Words: Modeling Phase: *I Do*

mér cu ry

Routine for Pronouncing and Defining Multisyllable Words, Part 2

- Create student-friendly definitions by using everyday language to explain the meaning of the word.
 - Compose the definition by using words that students know and understand.
 - Provide a contextualized explanation of the word.

Pronouncing and Defining Words: Modeling Phase: / Do

1. Student-friendly Definition

Mercury is an element in the metal family.

It is found in the form of a liquid at room temperature.

Mercury can be used in thermostats, batteries, and chemical processes.



2. Traditional Definition

Also known as quicksilver. A heavy, silvery-white, toxic, metallic element with the chemical symbol Hg that is liquid at room temperature or near temperature.

Pronouncing and Defining Words: Teacher-assisted Phase: *WE Do*

món ar chy

Pronouncing and Defining Words: Peer-assisted Phase: *WE Do*



Take turns practicing the routine with your partner, using the following word:

de t é r m i n e

- Write the word on the board with the syllables identified.
- Say the word with students:
 - Speak slowly, enunciating each syllable.
 - Stress each accented syllable.
- Repeat two or three times at a normal rate of speech.
- Tell students the simplified explanation or have them read the explanation with you.
- Repeat the word and its definition.

Web Sites

Student-friendly definitions

<http://www.oup.com/elt/catalogue/teachersites/oald7/?cc=global>

Idioms

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/results.asp?dict=A>

Math terms

<http://www.mathwords.com/>



Scaffolding Pronunciation

- Always pronounce content-specific words when introducing vocabulary.
- Frequently remind students to use the routine.
- Be respectful of English language learners and speakers of nonstandard dialects.

Scaffolding the Definition of Words

- Always provide a student-friendly definition (include illustrations or diagrams where appropriate) for any new academic and content-specific word.
- Check students' understanding of the word:
 - Options include asking partners to use the word in a sentence or to give examples of the word.
 - Support students who struggle, and reword the student-friendly definition if necessary.
- Gradually increase the precision and technicality of the definition.
- Point out cognates and false cognates.

Cognates

- Words that have similar pronunciation, spelling, and meaning in two languages
 - Often share the same Latin or Greek root
 - For example, *catastrope* in English is *catástrofe* in Spanish.
- More common among academic, content-specific, and abstract words than common or concrete words
- May not translate precisely due to connotations
 - An *inferior* means “a subordinate in the workplace” in both English and Spanish, but it is derogatory only in English.
- Web sites
 - <http://www.colorincolorado.org/cognates.pdf>
 - http://www.latinamericalinks.com/spanish_cognates.htm
 - <http://textproject.org/resources/spanish-english-cognates>

False Cognates

- Words that have similar pronunciation and spelling in two languages but have **different** meanings
 - *Billón* = 1,000,000,000,000 (*trillion*)
 - *Inconsecuente* = *contradictory*
- Often referred to as “false friends”
- Resources:
 - Web site for Spanish-English false cognates:
<http://www.miguelmilop.com/glos/index.php>
 - Dictionary of false cognates

Summary

- Understand characteristics of struggling middle school readers, the characteristics of text at this level, and the role of fluent and accurate reading at the secondary level.
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Reflection Log



Pronouncing and Defining Words

Think about how you might use the information presented in this module to plan instruction and support students' academic literacy needs.

- What seemed particularly useful to you?
- What ideas were new and interesting?
- What confirmed or challenged your previous beliefs?
- What questions do you still have?