

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction – Steps

- Select words to teach
- Introduce words:
 - Pronounce word with a visual model
 - State part of speech
 - Provide a student-friendly explanation
 - Provide examples
 - Draw an image
- Check students’ understanding and provide informal practice through planned oral activities
- Review periodically through games/activities
- **Tier One:** basic words: *walk, food, daddy*. Except for EL and word-impooverished students, Tier 1 words generally do not require instruction in school.
- **Tier Two:** frequently occurring words: *subsequent, utility, candidate, elimination*. Tier 2 words are central to comprehension in many subject areas and are, therefore, the best candidates for explicit instruction.
- **Tier Three:** low frequency words that are tied to a specific field or content area: *cellulose, hegemony, personification*. Tier 3 words should only be taught when the need arises.
- Criteria for selection for ELs:
 - Concreteness (visual)
 - Cognate status (home language)
 - Depth of meaning (multiple meanings)
 - Utility
- Researchers are generally in agreement that students are able to learn 10-15 words per week; or 2-3 words, per teacher, per subject.
- Pronounce the word with a visual model: “The word is *visible*.”
- Break the word into syllables (oral and written): “*vis i ble*”.
- Have students repeat the word in syllables and then blended: “Say the word with me: *vis i ble*; now say it fast, *visible*.”

Clarify the part of speech – “*Visible* is an adjective or a word that describes a noun.”

- Characterize the word and how it is typically used.
- Explain the meaning in everyday language.

Provide examples to clarify the meaning of words:

- From my bedroom window, the moon was clearly *visible*.
- My house is behind a wall and isn’t *visible* from the street.

- As soon as the cat was *visible*, my dog began to bark.
 - The mountains weren't *visible* until the fog lifted.
- Students need to create a linguistic and non-linguistic representation of words to store in long-term memory.
 - This is best done after the students have expressed the definition in their own words.
 - These representations of the words can be in the form of graphic organizers (Thinking Maps), pictographs, illustrations, pictures.
 - To check for understanding, the teacher provides students with opportunities to use the new words.
 - The “checking for understanding” activities help students understand the words at deeper levels because of repeated and varied exposure.
 - These activities can be done orally as sponge activities or in a “game” format.

Processing questions – Ask questions that require students to process the meanings of the new words:

- Would it be a problem if your thoughts were *visible* to others?
- If thunder was *visible*, what would it look like?

Idea Completions – Provide students with sentence stems that require them to integrate a word's meaning into a context in order to explain a situation:

- The car did not become *visible* until . . .
- It was *visible* to me that my friend was upset when . . .

Have you ever? – Have students associate newly learned words with familiar contexts and experiences.

- Have you ever wished someone's thoughts were *visible*?
- Describe a time when you wished you were not *visible*.

Fill in the blank – Use the target word in a sentence stating the word as a “blank” for students to restate the word.

- When the sun went behind the cloud, it was not _____. (*visible*)
- The cat was _____ until it crawled under the bed. (*visible*)

Making Choices – Have students choose a word if it fits in a certain context.

- If any of the things I say are things that are visible, say, “That is *visible*.” If they are not, don't say anything.
 - Your thumb
 - The smell of popcorn
 - Fog
 - A new movie