



Mastering **VOCABULARY**

**A Practical Guide For Teaching
Vocabulary To Young Children**



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WELCOME

You can't start too early!

Vocabulary development is crucial in the early years of a child's life as it lays the foundation for effective communication, cognitive growth, and academic success.



SUCCESSFUL KIDS

What's

INSIDE

Part 1	Three Early Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary	5
Part 2	Ten Tips on Teaching Vocabulary - Thematic Activities for the Brain (TABs)	17
Part 3	Other Vocabulary Building Activities to Expand and Clarify Language	33



Crucial Vocabulary Development for Young Children

From birth, children are like sponges, absorbing words and sounds from their environment.



Engaging children in conversations, reading aloud, singing songs, and interactive play are effective ways to expand their vocabulary.

Let's do this!

Part 1

Three vocabulary strategies.



A

Talking to your baby

B

The Rhythm of Language



C

Reading Aloud



Talking to your baby and describing the world around them.

A

7 Approaches

- 1 Name your activity and describe it.
- 2 Interact with toys
- 3 Identify people they know
- 4 Discuss things in the environment.
- 5 Take nature walks
- 6 Describe a shopping experience.
- 7 Take advantage of daily activities.

*“The more that you read, the more things
you will know. The more that you learn,
the more places you’ll go.”*

–Dr. Seuss

Talking to your baby

- 1 Name your activity and describe it

Name and describe what you’re doing, seeing, hearing, and feeling. Later on, your descriptions can include colors, sizes, shapes, numbers and letters.



- 2 Interactive toys for building children’s vocabulary

Describe actions and objects during play to provide a rich language experience, fostering their vocabulary development and cognitive growth.



- 3 Identify people they know and their relationship

Name people in their environment and tell what their relationship is to the child. For example, “**Fido is our dog.**”



4 Discuss things in the environment

Talk about things in the environment and categorize them by size, shape, color, etc. For example, things in a kitchen drawer, socks in the bedroom, shapes of lids that fit containers.



5 Exploring Nature: A Sensory Adventure

Go on nature walks and describe the trees, flowers, animals, signs, cars. Smell the flowers. Listen for sounds and talk about what you're hearing.



6 While shopping at any store

When shopping at any store, talk about what you're seeing, how you're deciding what to buy, how things feel, smell, or look.



7 Take advantage of daily activities

In the kitchen- Name the utensils needed. Discuss the foods you'll be eating, their color, texture, and taste. Have your child help with cleaning up as soon as possible. Emphasize the use of prepositions by identifying where something is going - "on the plate," "under the lid," "over the napkin"



When should we start teaching vocabulary?

Learning and understanding words begins at birth. A baby begins taking in the world through sensory input - hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and touching/feeling. As the senses develop and the baby starts to make connections, words will begin to mean specific things. Giving babies and young children the words to describe their world - what they hear, see, taste, smell, and touch/feel - will help them communicate with confidence and will benefit them throughout their lives.

B

Three Methods

1 Singing songs

2 Rhyming

3 Storytelling



Horned Lark
(*Eremophila alpestris*)

Singing starts the ball rolling so the brain connects rhythm and rhyme to words being sung. Cuddling and singing songs creates a feeling of love and belonging and a connection to words.

1 Singing songs

When parents sing to their children, the melodic and repetitive nature of songs captures the child's attention and enhances memory retention.



2 Rhyming

The rhythmic and rhyming structure of songs helps children anticipate sounds, fostering phonemic awareness, a critical skill for reading and writing.

3 Storytelling

Storytelling enhances vocabulary development, encourages active language use, and makes learning enjoyable for children.



The Rhythm of Language

Here's a list of popular children's songs, with plenty of matching books.

The Wheels on the Bus

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Itsy Bitsy Spider

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

Old MacDonald Had a Farm

You are My Sunshine

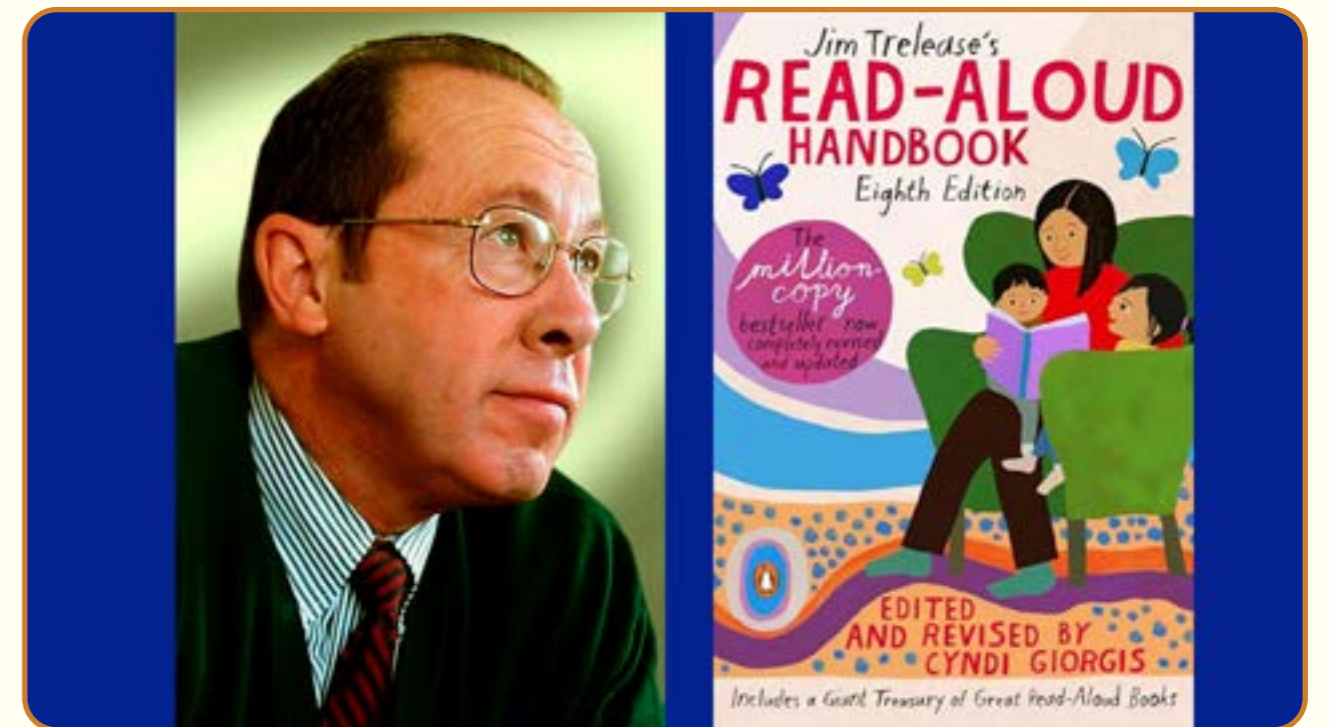
Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Willoughby, Wallaby We

Lullabies at bedtime

Looking at books which are called Read-Aloud

C



“Conversation is the prime garden where vocabulary grows.”

-Jim Trelease

Children who have bigger vocabularies when they start kindergarten are more advanced than those who have smaller vocabularies.

Reading Aloud

Reading to your child every day is not so much a science, as it is a beneficial routine. Although research does acknowledge the importance of reading to your child consistently, every day - so there is some science behind the reasons to do it.



Here are some additional benefits your child will receive by you reading aloud every day:

- ◆ **A sense of connection** - to you and to the world
- ◆ An understanding that **print is a source of enjoyment** and comprehension
- ◆ An understanding that **learning to read** is

Reading Aloud

- ◆ Print awareness - **concepts of books and print**. For example, we read left to right, top to bottom; this is the front of the book; this is the back of the book; this is a title; this is the author and illustrator
- ◆ Language and **vocabulary** takes a child outside of his/her tiny world
- ◆ Hearing the **cadence and rhythm of language**, sentence structure, and grammar becomes familiar and leads to being able to talk and communicate.
- ◆ Understanding the lives and **feelings of others**.



This is not an exhaustive list by any means, but the bottom line is that you should read to your children, for at least **10 minutes a day**.

Part 2

Ten Tips on Teaching Vocabulary - Thematic Activities for the Brain (TABs)

This section will highlight **TEN specific strategies** that can be used to build vocabulary using “themes.” Thematic teaching helps develop **content knowledge and background in specific areas.**



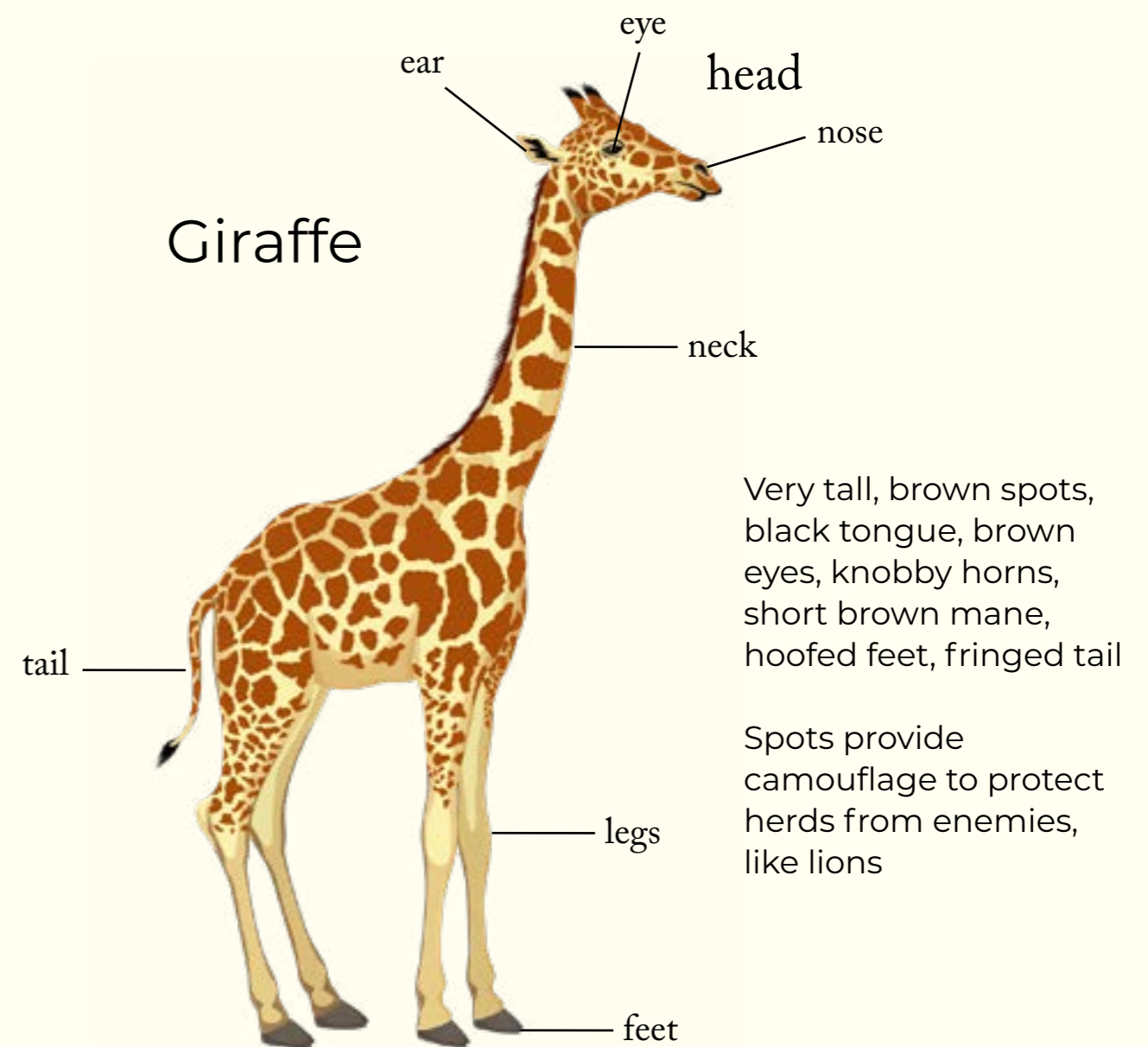
The theme for this section will be **GOING TO THE ZOO** so the strategies you’ll see here will be designed to enhance vocabulary based on things you’d see at the zoo.

Here goes the adventure!

Going to the Zoo

Strategy #1

Using Pictures to **LABEL** and **DESCRIBE**:
(including drawings and photos)



When a child is not yet reading, just point and name. You can also write the names and attach them to a picture so that kids can see that letters make words, and words have meaning.

Going to the Zoo

Strategy #2

Using Pictures for Narratives - a scene or story -
Look at a picture and talk about the scene. Tell a detailed story about what is happening in the picture.

Here's an example of a Meerkat exhibit at the zoo:



“**Meerkats** are small, furry animals in Africa related to the mongoose. They live in underground “cities” with about 25 members called a “mob.” One meerkat stands guard for predators like hawks and jackals. They eat insects, small animals, and plants. Meerkats have large eyes to see in the tunnels, large claws to dig in the tunnels, and they have large ears, but they can close them when digging tunnels”

Going to the Zoo

Strategy #3

Using Realia - Realia is the use of 3D objects to explain something and describe what it is and what it does.



Here I'm using little penguin figures to talk about different kinds and features of penguins at the zoo, and show, for example, how they use camouflage when they swim.

Going to the Zoo

Strategy #4

Total Physical Response - TPR is a method of teaching language or vocabulary concepts by using physical movement to react to verbal input.



adult



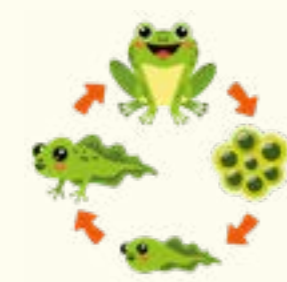
froglet



tadpole



egg



It's not sign language, but it creates reminders of concepts when utilized. In looking at the life cycle of a frog at the zoo, we could use the hands and body to show the stages - Egg, tadpole, froglet, and adult.

Going to the Zoo

Strategy #5

Rehearsing - Rehearsing is a process of teaching talking points about a subject and then the child rehearses them, by telling someone else - over and over.

Choose an animal, describe it and have the child rehearse the details.

Here is how we could talk about a Scarlet Macaw:

A Scarlet Macaw is a large, colorful bird



The bill is curved to help it eat fruit, seeds, and nuts.

The Scarlet Macaw lives in the canopy of the tropical rainforests of Central and South America

The more a child can explain something to someone else, and practice, the better they will remember the words and concepts.

Going to the Zoo

Strategy #5 - continued

From the top of its head to the end of its tail, the macaw is about 35 inches long.



It can fly at a speed of 35 miles per hour.

Macaws nest in holes of the treetops and the baby macaws stay with the parents for up to two years.



Going to the Zoo

Strategy #6

Graphic Organizers and Charts - Graphic organizers and charts help organize the information in the topic of study.

This chart organizes information about zoo animals, their physical descriptions, locations, and special characteristics. Organizing this information helps older children to write comparing and contrasting essays.

	Giraffe	Elephant	Gorilla	Lion	Monkey
Description	Tallest land mammal	Very large; tough, gray skin and trunk	Large, quiet, shy ape - dark brown, black	Large, gold-colored cat	125 species of monkeys but all have long arms and hands
Habitat	African grassland	Africa and Asia	Africa	Africa and India	Across the world - in trees mostly
Diet	Plant eater - trees	Plant-eater: Trees, grass, roots, fruit	Plant parts, and will eat ants and termites	Meat of large herding animals	Leaves, fruit, seeds, grass, eggs, insects, small animals
Special Info	Can go a long time without water	Excellent swimmers	No tail; unique nose print	The females do most of the hunting	Most have prehensile (grasping) tails
Baby Name	Calf	Calf	Infant	Cub	Infant

Going to the Zoo

Strategy #7

Songs, Poems, Chants

Songs, poems and chants are easy ways to bring fun and depth to learning about a subject. Songs make learning more interesting, and activates a different part of the brain to better retain information.



Here's a fun interactive Zoo Song:

<https://supersimple.com/song/lets-go-to-the-zoo/>

Going to the Zoo

Strategy #8

Making Books - You can create books in several different ways.

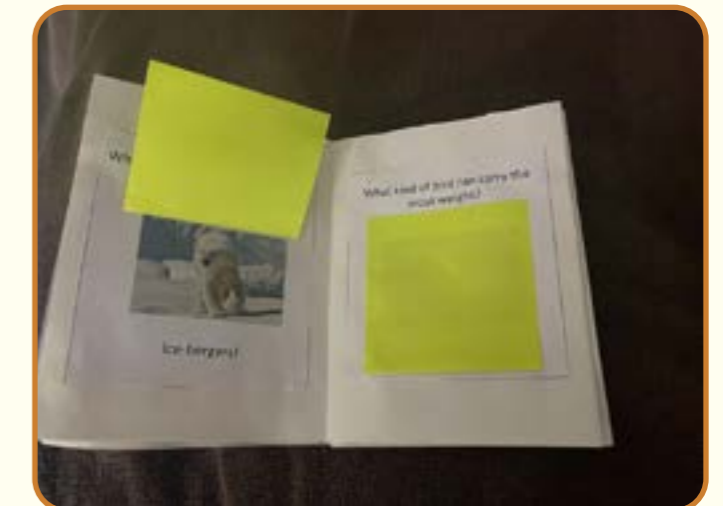
1. You can simply fold a paper in half and staple it together.
2. You can buy cheap journal books from the discount store.
3. You can make a foldable book and then fill it with pictures and words that you want the child to remember.

Here's how to make a book yourself:



This paper booklet begins as a 11" X 17" sheet of paper.

Post-It Notes works well for the flaps.



Going to the Zoo

Strategy #8 - Continued

Steps

- 1  11" X 17 "Paper
- 2  fold lengthwise
- 3  fold again
- 4  fold again
- 5  open up
- 6  fold across
- 7  cut here
- 8  half way across
- 9  refold lengthwise
- 10  push to the center
- 11  align top edges
- 12  fold and flatten

Going to the Zoo

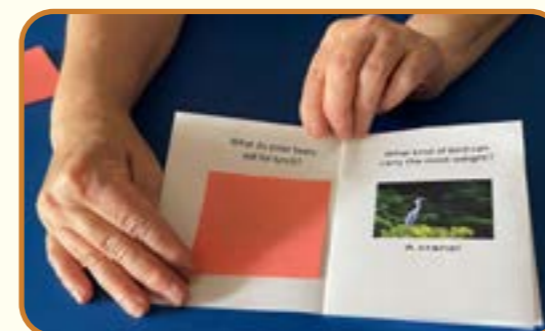
Strategy #8 - Continued

Creating the book:

For this example, we'll make a ZOO ANIMAL RIDDLE BOOK for some animals you'd see at the zoo.

- The PDF to the right is what the riddle book will look like after it is printed.
- Use the link below to download the PDF file for the Zoo Riddle Book and have it printed on 11 X 17 size paper.
- Then you can follow the directions for folding and cutting the slot to complete the book.
- After folding and cutting, apply the Post-It-Notes to cover the riddle answers and you'll be in business.

[Riddle Book PDF](#)



"What do polar bears eat for lunch?"



"Ice-bergers!"

Going to the Zoo

Strategy #8 - Continued

PDF

11"

Ice-bergers! 	What do polar bears eat for lunch?	MY ZOO RIDDLE BOOK	
A crane! 	What kind of bird can carry the most weight?		 To see butter-fly
AN ELEPH-ANTI 	What's the biggest ant in the world?		 With its flippers!
A Mon-key! 	What key won't unlock any door?		 The outside!
			17"

Going to the Zoo

Strategy #9

Writing using information gathered

You can utilize the information you've gathered to have older children create informational text telling about their topic, or for younger kids, you can do the writing and they will provide the information.

Here is an essay comparing and contrasting the African and Asian Elephants:



African



Asian

African and Asian elephants are similar in many ways. They live in family groups and are excellent swimmers. Both have tough, wrinkled, grayish skin, large ears, and trunks. Although they are the same in many ways, they also have many differences.

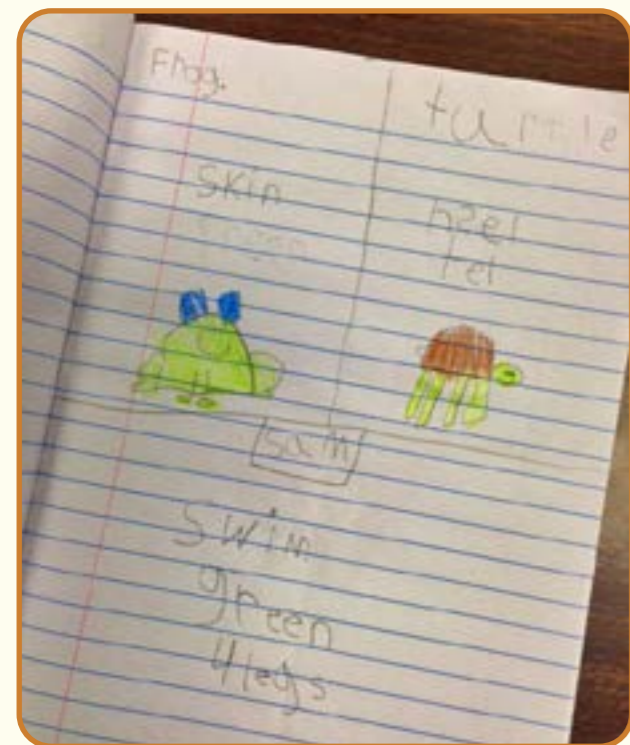
African elephants are larger with three hind toenails. All adult African elephants have tusks, only male Asian elephants have tusks. Asian elephants are smaller but have four toenails on their hind feet.

African elephants use their trunks to grasp objects with two finger-like tips, while Asian elephants, with one tip, scoop instead. Both African and Asian elephants are interesting animals.

Going to the Zoo

Strategy #10 Field Trips

A field trip is the best kind of vocabulary builder because it gets kids up close to the real things. Outfit your kids with observation kits when you go - magnifying glasses, binoculars, notebooks, pencils.



Let children write or draw what interests them in their notebooks. Make it fun, not work! Encourage exploration by using professional titles like biologist or astronomer. Use docents and signs for explanations.



Going to the Zoo

Ten Strategies



These are just a few ways that you can build vocabulary using themes. You can do much with just your daily routines of **explaining, labeling, describing, and reading aloud**, but being intentional about teaching vocabulary will help your child organize information in the brain and solidify concepts - to help the vocabulary stick!

See our other Thematic Activities for the Brain (TABs) - Vocabulary on our website! -

<https://readingfever.com/>

Part 3

Other Vocabulary Building Activities to expand and clarify language

This section will show you **MORE** ways to help build vocabulary knowledge through some easy exercises that add depth, complexity, and clarity of words.

Here are six easy ways to help build word knowledge through:

- Synonyms
- Antonyms
- Homographs
- Homophones
- Vocabulary
- Depth Charts
- Descriptive
- Picture Charts

Try incorporating these concepts into your vocabulary practice to deepen your child's understanding and knowledge of words.

Synonyms

Synonyms - words that mean the same or almost the same thing

Say, "Can you think of another word that means the same as....?"

ask - question

before - prior to

brave - valiant

build - construct

children - kids

enormous - gigantic

every - all

gift - present

kind - gentle

large - big

nation - country

near - close

new - recent

ocean - sea

push - shove

right - correct

start - begin

stop - quit

summit- peak

tasty - delicious

under - below

work - labor

yank - pull

zero - nothing

Antonyms

Antonyms - Words that are the opposite or nearly opposite

Say, "Let's think of a word that means the opposite of this word..." For younger children, hold out one hand and say one word, hold out the other hand and say the opposite word, then proclaim: "They are opposites!"

above - below
all - none
before - after
big - little
closed - open
crooked - straight
day - night
fast - slow
friend - enemy
good - bad
high - low

light - dark
long - short
near - far
outside - inside
right - left
right - wrong
start - stop
tall - short
under - over
young - old

Homographs

Homographs - words that are spelled the same but have different meanings and sometimes different pronunciations. For example, "lead" (to guide) and "lead" (a type of metal).

Say, "This word has more than one meaning. Let's talk about the other meanings of this word."

Examples:

ball - a spherical object	sock - a stocking
ball - a formal dance	sock - to hit hard
ball - a spherical object	ray - a flat fish
ball - a formal dance	ray - a beam of sunlight
buck - a male deer	like - similar
buck - a dollar	like - to be pleased with

Continued...

Homographs

Continued

Examples:

hide - to stay out of sight

hide - the skin of an animal

duck - a water bird

duck - to dip all of a sudden

bank - the edge of a river or lake

bank - a place for financial deals.

date - a time on a calendar

date - a sweet fruit from a date palm

fast - quick

fast - to go without food on purpose

tire - to become weary

tire - the round rubber part of a wheel

school - a group of fish

school - a place for teaching and learning

pitcher - a container for pouring liquids

pitcher - a baseball player

there - a place where something is

their - belonging to multiple people

they're - contraction for "they are"

Homophones

This exercise works best for children who can read and write because spelling applies.

Homophones - words that sound alike but are spelled differently and have different meanings

** The King Who Rained by Fred Gwynne is a funny read-aloud that shows how mixing up homophones changes the meaning of text and causes confusion.

Say, "This word sounds like another word, but is spelled differently and has a different meaning. Let's look at these words."

Example:

ate - past tense of "eat"

eight - a number



8



Homophones

Examples:

steal - to rob
steel - a metal

flea - a tiny insect
flee - to run away

dear - highly valued or loved
deer - an animal

rain - moisture from clouds
reign - the period of time of a ruler
rein - the straps that control a horse

heal - to make well
heel - a part of the foot
he'll - a contraction for "he will"

to - toward something
too - also
two - a number

blew - past tense of "blow"
blue - a color

hole - an opening
whole - all of something

knew - past tense of "know"
new - not existing at a previous time

Continued...



Homophones

Continued

capital - available for investing
capitol - the head place of a government

your - possessive of "you"
you're - contraction for "you are"

council - an advisory group
counsel - to give advice

weak - feeble
week - a period of seven days

brake - to slow or stop something
break - to crack or destroy

bass - a low musical pitch
base - the bottom part of something

sail - a sheet of canvas that fills with wind
sale - something available for purchase

tail - an extension of the spine of an animal
tale - a story



Vocabulary Depth Chart:

Two types of vocabulary development charts are shown here.

The charts are used to expand meaning, and give depth and complexity to a target word. Using the chart adds layers of understanding of a word, and helps a child better remember it.

Choose a word and try one of them out with your child!

TARGET WORD: _____

Synonym	Antonym
Simple Definition	Use in a sentence



Vocabulary Depth Chart:

Example:

TARGET WORD: bright

Synonym shiny	Antonym dim
Simple Definition giving off a lot of light	Use in a sentence The sun is bright.

Example:

TARGET WORD: bright

Synonym clever	Antonym dull
Simple Definition quick to understand	Use in a sentence The inventor is bright.

Descriptive Picture Chart:



Descriptive Picture Chart:

You try it!

Example:

TARGET WORD: **DINGO**

<p>Simple Definition</p> <p>A wild dog from Australia</p>	<p>Description</p> <p>It has a golden-brown coat, pointy ears, and a bushy tail.</p>
<p>Picture</p> 	<p>Use in a sentence</p> <p>The <u>dingo</u> went hunting in the tall grass.</p>

TARGET WORD: _____

<p>Simple Definition</p>	<p>Description</p>
<p>Picture</p>	<p>Use in a sentence</p>

SUMMARY:

Vocabulary is the sum total of a person's known words and is one of the best indicators of a child's success in school. The brains of babies are wired to learn language, so taking advantage of these early years of life is critical! This Vocabulary Guide has provided over 30 strategies and dozens of specific examples that can be easily incorporated into language and vocabulary work with any child, regardless of age. Anyone who works with children can use these ideas! Take advantage of our organizers to track the results of the magic of seeing these strategies work in the lives of those children who are important to you!

Start today - choose an idea and give it a try!

Resources

Song Lyrics

The Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go round and round
Round and round
Round and round
The wheels on the bus go round and round
All through the town

The doors on the bus go open and shut
Open and shut
Open and shut
The doors on the bus go open and shut
All through the town

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish
Swish, swish, swish
Swish, swish, swish
The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish
All through the town



Resources

Song Lyrics

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky
Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are

Itsy Bitsy Spider

The itsy-bitsy spider
Climbed up the water spout
Down came the rain
And washed the spider out
Out came the sun
And dried up all the rain
And the itsy-bitsy spider
Climbed up the spout again



Resources

Song Lyrics

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes
And eyes and ears and mouth and nose
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes

Old MacDonald Had a Farm

Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O
And on that farm he had a pig, E-I-E-I-O
With a oink-oink here and a oink-oink there
Here a oink, there a oink, everywhere a oink-oink
Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O

And on that farm he had a duck, E-I-E-I-O
With a quack-quack here and a quack-quack there
Here a quack, there a quack, everywhere a quack-
quack
Oink-oink here and a oink-oink there
Here a oink, there a oink, everywhere a oink-oink
Old MacDonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O

Weekly

Planning

Weekly Goals

To do list

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Sun

Thank you!

for participating



Contact Us:

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