

Introduction

Word Feast Adolescent is one of the highest skill-level products ever published by LinguSystems. It is not, however, presented as an insurmountable challenge for students with language delays. The goal of the book is the opposite: to show that when the research-based, tested techniques of vocabulary acquisition is presented using techniques from the innovative resource *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction* (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002), higher order vocabulary can be approached and internalized by students of all abilities. In addition to achieving a higher level of sophistication in their expressive language and writing, students will feel a sense of satisfaction as they successfully internalize these more challenging words. This will result in a level of motivation and reward they do not often experience in the academic setting. Plus, we hope they'll have fun wrapping their lips and minds around some of these bigger, more precise vocabulary selections.

Many of you who found *Word Feast Elementary* and *Word Feast Middle School* effective have asked for another level in the series that would be appropriate for high school-aged students and beyond. *Word Feast Adolescent* fulfills those requests by providing a higher order of individual vocabulary words as well as contextual passages at both a higher reading level (ranging from grades 6.0 to 11.0) and a greater level of sophistication. Although we use active voice in most of the reading selections, we have also added complex sentences, passive voice, and longer quotations than we presented in the previous books in the series.

For those of you new to the *Word Feast* approach, it is based on Beck's contention that there are three "tiers" of vocabulary acquisition:

- Tier One: These are words the student doesn't need to be explicitly taught, like basic sight words and words that exist in his personal vocabulary.
- Tier Two: These are words that appear frequently in written, spoken, and academic discourse, but are not a regular part of the student's vocabulary. The student may recognize these words, but he will not know their specific meaning or proper usage.
- Tier Three: These are low-frequency words that are limited to specific domains, school subjects, or careers. They include technical terms, jargon, and specific usage words.

Word Feast Adolescent focuses mostly on teaching Tier Two words — the selections that enrich a student's personal and academic worlds. There are a few Tier Three words in the mix (e.g., *atrophy*, *vegetarian*) because they are present in a variety of academic and everyday contexts. We selected new words based on a few key criteria that contribute to their utility in a student's life as well as to the likelihood that the student will internalize the terms using the techniques suggested by Beck.

1. Importance and utility — words that appear frequently across a variety of domains and that contribute not only to their utility in a student's life but also to the likelihood that the terms will be internalized using the techniques suggested by Beck
2. Instructional potential — words that have rich meanings and connect the student to other words and concepts
3. Conceptual understanding — words that provide specificity and precision of use and are words that students have probably already encountered
4. Concrete meanings — words that have familiar synonyms and/or antonyms and can be easily defined in a few words
5. Unique sound or connotation — words that kids will have fun learning and saying out loud. Students with language delays are often ill-equipped or not encouraged to play with language, but that is always a goal of a *Word Feast* book.

Beck and her colleagues suggested that new vocabulary acquisition is more likely and effective when a word is easily definable, is presented with synonyms and antonyms, is introduced with other words or concepts associated with it, and can connect with a student on a personal level. The activities in *Word Feast Adolescent* address all of these criteria. Each lesson is centered on a specific theme, presents ten new vocabulary words, and consists of the following elements:

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- an Instructor’s Page that presents the new words and strategies for introducing the topic of the lesson
- two or three reading passages that present each new vocabulary word in at least two contexts. Vocabulary words from previous lessons are also included in the reading passages. The first time a vocabulary word is re-used, it is noted on the Instructor’s Page of that lesson. A word may be used again in later reading passages, but the first repeat is the only one noted.
- definitions for the new words, including usage tips and correct and incorrect examples of each word used in context
- several pages of activities that explore associations, word flexibility, antonyms/synonyms, and making a personal connection to the new words. The Word Flexibility activity allows students to explore the new words in their various forms in context. In some cases, related words or words that are often confused with the target word are also used.

A note on the tasks: Your students might find some of the Making Associations and Antonym/Synonym Match-Up tasks particularly challenging as it may appear that more than one word is appropriate as an answer. Encourage students to choose the *best* answer for an item, not one that would just be possible. A challenge — and subsequent reward — of learning new vocabulary is understanding the most precise usage of a word.

Chapter Progression and Content

We selected topics we thought would not only be of general interest to an adolescent reader but that would also provide some knowledge in areas they haven’t explored on their own. Rather than focus on academic-level writing, though, we provide the context of lighthearted articles, interviews, tips, and opinion pieces. Many of the subjects we tackle can be debated, and we encourage you and your students to explore your opinions as you approach the topics together.

The vocabulary, complexity of reading, and the activities themselves escalate in difficulty as the book progresses. By Lesson 4, not only is previous vocabulary being repeated in the reading contexts, words from previous lessons appear in the Word Flexibility cloze activities. Lessons 14-16 are presented as a particular challenge to students who have successfully reached that point in the book. Some of the new words begin to reach a level of abstraction. The more challenging words repeated from previous lessons make the reading load a bit denser, and the activities are definitely a step-up in difficulty. We chose topics for these lessons to engage and motivate students to tackle the challenges instead of becoming intimidated. Still, working through these lessons will likely require a high degree of collaboration and much leadership from you.

The SLP as Teacher

And, speaking of leadership, although students might want to initially read the passages independently, we suggest you read them aloud first. Silent, independent reading does not allow students to experience crucial prosodic and tone-of-voice cues that listening affords. These passages are loaded with words rich in emotion and connotation, and a key to acquiring and absorbing their meanings is to experience multisensory context clues. In other words, make sure you pour on the inflection and ham it up as you read.

Before approaching the activities, use the reading passages to point out and explore the new words in context. Rather than simply providing definitions to the new words, encourage students to explore their associations and properties by asking questions:

- What’s another word you think might have the same meaning as _____?
- Does _____ refer to the way someone feels or something someone does? How do you know?
- Where else have you heard _____ before?
- What’s a word you think means the opposite of _____?

We hope you and your students find the new words, contexts, and activities here as fun and challenging to approach as we did to collect and present for you.

Have fun feasting on words together! — Paul and Linda

Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.