

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary development is an integral part of speaking, reading, and writing.

If readers can read, but do not understand the words, they cannot fully comprehend what they are reading. Therefore, it is necessary to provide readers with a solid vocabulary foundation.

Basic Vocabulary, a two-book series, promotes reading success in your classroom with these age-appropriate, low-readability activities. With over 400 specific words, six vocabulary strategies, and over 100 activities, each book offers extensive vocabulary practice. Activities are presented in a variety of formats to accommodate diverse classrooms.

HOW DOES VOCABULARY AFFECT READING?

Researchers suggest that vocabulary development plays an important role in the reading process. Students use their prior word knowledge to help them comprehend what they read.

Vocabulary is acquired and developed indirectly and directly. Students acquire vocabulary indirectly through conversation by listening to oral reading and by interacting with print. When words and strategies are presented directly to students, their reading comprehension will increase. The chance that students will truly understand the meaning of words and how to use them increases when the words are presented in multiple contexts.

Strategies help students determine the meaning of words they have not previously read. When students are taught vocabulary directly and use vocabulary strategies, their confidence increases and their reading abilities and skills improve.

SEVEN UNITS

Activities and assessments are presented in seven units. The units are:

- Vocabulary Words
- Context Clues
- Compound Words
- Synonyms and Antonyms
- Homophones
- Multiple Meanings
- Base Words

The first unit includes 23 lists of vocabulary words. The remaining six units cover specific concepts and skills through interactive exercises and activity sheets.

The units can be covered from beginning to end or simultaneously, depending on the needs and skills of the students.

The Vocabulary Words Unit contains lists composed of five to eight words for each activity, grouped according to useful, real-world topics. Most of the words featured in these lists are repeated in the following units. The Context Clues unit provides opportunities for students to discover the appropriate usage or meanings of words by using picture clues, completing sentences, and using hints provided in the sentence structure. Then, students can use this strategy to understand unfamiliar words they discover in their own reading.

The Compound Words, Synonyms and Antonyms, and Homophones Units contain activities that ask students to decipher relationships of words and appropriate words, based on context. The Multiple Meanings Unit focuses on words that are spelled the same way but have different meanings, based on usage and context in sentences. Students are asked to determine the correct meanings of given words in pictures, phrases, and sentences.

In the Base Words Unit, students examine vocabulary words to identify their base words. Knowledge of word parts enables students to associate unknown words with familiar words. Although each skill has several levels of difficulty, the skills included in each unit are presented at a basic level. For higher-level vocabulary skills and strategies, refer to the second book of the *Basic Vocabulary Series*.

DEFINITIONS

vocabulary words—words that students use and understand in oral and written language

context clues—skill and strategy used to determine the meaning of a word or identify the appropriate word to complete the sentence, using hints and clues stated in the sentence or the semantics of the sentence

compound words—words made by combining more than two unrelated whole words to make new words

synonyms—words that have similar meanings

antonyms—words that have opposite meanings

homophones—words that are pronounced the same way, but have different spellings and different meanings

multiple meanings—words that are pronounced and spelled the same way, but have more than one meaning, part of speech, or usage

base words—words to which other word parts, like prefixes and suffixes, are added to make new words

Activity Sheets

Each unit provides activity sheets that employ a variety of learning styles to foster students' mastery of vocabulary skills and strategies. Each activity is designed so that the teacher has the option to assign it as either an independent activity or a group activity. If the work is completed by groups, make sure that each student understands the skill and is able to explain it in his or her own words before moving on to the next skill. After each skill and strategy has been taught, the activity sheets can be sent home with the students for review, reinforcement, or homework.

Assessments

Each unit has an assessment to check for mastery of the skills and strategies, except for unit one. While these assessments are meant to measure students' mastery of vocabulary skills and strategies following the completion of units, they can also be used as pretests to measure prior knowledge.

Answer Key

An answer key for each activity is located at the end of the book (see pages 108–119).

Name: _____ Date: _____

VOCABULARY WORDS
VEGETABLES

Directions:
Look at each seed packet.
Label each seed packet with a word from the word bank.

Word Bank
carrot peas corn lettuce broccoli pumpkin

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Name: _____ Date: _____

CONTEXT CLUES
ASSESSMENT

Directions:
Read each sentence.
Fill in the circle beside the word that best completes each sentence.

- The boy and girl _____ in the park.
 swing
 run
 climb
- The boy _____ the baseball.
 catches
 hits
 throws
- The dog is _____ the dog house.
 beside
 above
 in
- The man plants a _____ in the pot.
 tree
 vine
 flower
- The cookies taste _____.
 sweet
 rough
 soft

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RESEARCH AND STANDARDS

Teaching vocabulary skills to students with reading difficulties can greatly enhance student reading abilities, according to recent research. Vocabulary plays an important role in learning to read. Students who have a greater verbal vocabulary usually have better reading comprehension skills because they use the words they have heard to make sense of the words they see in print (Armbruster, Lehr, Osborn, 2001).

Students learn vocabulary two ways: directly and indirectly. Indirect learning happens when students hear and see words used in many different contexts (Armbruster et al., 2001), and students learn vocabulary directly when they are explicitly taught both individual words and word-learning strategies (Armbruster, Lehr, Osborn, 2001). Basic Vocabulary series 1 and 2 focuses on teaching vocabulary directly by covering a variety of word-learning strategies.

According to research, "specific word instruction, or teaching individual words, can deepen students' knowledge of word meanings. In-depth knowledge of word meanings can help students understand what they are hearing or reading" (Armbruster et al., 2001). Basic Vocabulary was created to provide multiple opportunities for students to read, occur, and apply common and familiar vocabulary words. This supports the research suggesting that the more students "see, hear, and work with specific words, the better they seem to learn them" (Armbruster et al., 2001).

Research suggests that "the primary instructional procedure for facilitating strong vocabulary development is to ensure that students develop independent strategies for learning the meaning of words as they occur in context" (Blaker, Komenau, Simmons, 1995). Fourties and Perini (1996, p. 186) suggest that "vocabulary acquisition is fostered not by one approach, but by a combination of approaches." Basic Vocabulary addresses a variety of approaches to teaching vocabulary, including context clues to determine word meanings, word relationships with one another, and word parts to understand the words in text.

The studies reviewed by the National Reading Panel suggest that vocabulary instruction leads to gains in comprehension, but the methods must be appropriate to the age and ability of the reader (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Basic Vocabulary utilizes a variety of methods to teach vocabulary skills while doing so on a low readability. Multiple activities address each skill to ensure an adequate amount of practice to help students succeed with the strategies and words.

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