



# Building Background Knowledge and Academic Vocabulary



# Objectives



- Review strategies for promoting English language acquisition.
- Identify and practice techniques for building academic vocabulary.

# Reflect and Discuss



Was your most recent activity beneficial for the English learners at your site?

Why or why not?





# Explore

Let's explore some instructional strategies known to be beneficial to students learning English.





# A Fable of Algorithms

## The Ant and the Grasshopper: A Fable of Algorithms

**An algorithm is a set of specific steps or instructions for solving a problem.**

One summer day a grasshopper came upon an ant who was collecting grain. The grasshopper watched as the ant struggled to remove a kernel from a fallen stalk. After a few minutes, the grasshopper spoke.

"Little ant, what are you doing?" the grasshopper asked.

"Collecting food for the winter," responded the ant in a weary voice. He was exhausted from a day of hard labor.



# Instructional Strategies for English Learners



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## Instructional Strategies for English Learners

The ideas and techniques listed below can be used to make the most of your English learners' activity time.



| Instructional Strategy          | Description   | In Action  |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| <i>Activate prior knowledge</i> | Activating prior knowledge means discovering what learners already know about a topic. "Prior knowledge" can be accurate or inaccurate, and it can impact comprehension of new content as students connect new learning to prior knowledge. Identifying prior knowledge gives you a chance to clear up misconceptions. It also gives you a starting point for building their knowledge. | Prior knowledge can be activated by having ELs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Discuss and reflect</b> on what they know about a concept.</li><li>• <b>Draw a sketch or diagram</b> to show their understanding.</li><li>• <b>Respond to an <a href="#">anticipation guide</a></b> (a set of statements or questions that trigger students' thinking and curiosity about a topic).</li></ul> |

# Activating Prior Knowledge



- What you know about a topic
- Can be accurate or inaccurate
- Provides a starting point for building knowledge of a topic



# Building Background Knowledge

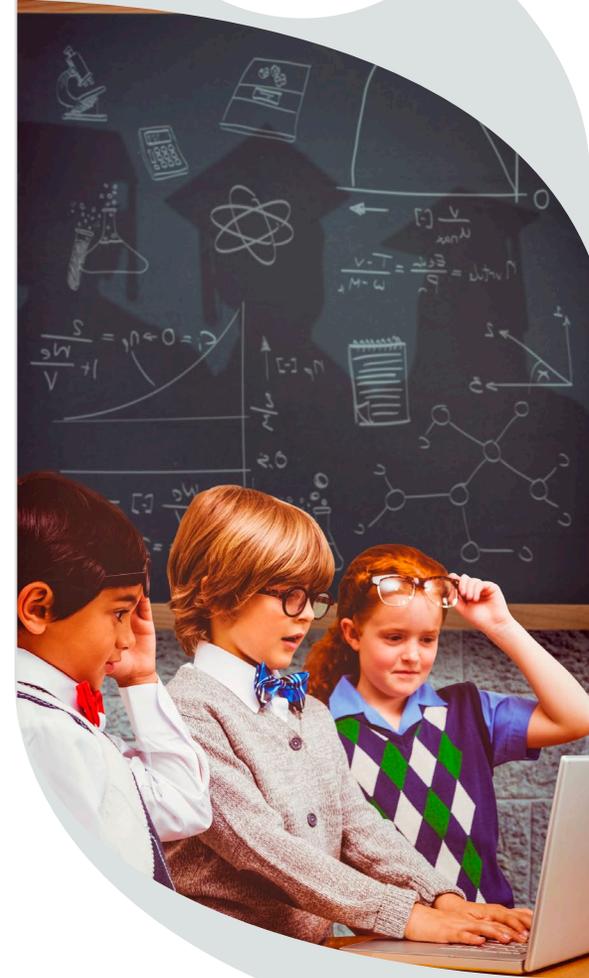


- Show visual images, videos or audio clips.
- Provide hands-on activities and experiences.
- Have students interact with real objects.



# Build Academic Language and Vocabulary

- Use visuals to demonstrate what a vocabulary term is and is not.
- Provide sentence starters when asking for an oral or written response.
- Use models and graphic organizers.





# Frayer Model



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## Frayer Chart

### Steps for Using the Frayer Chart:

1. Place the target word in the center of the chart.
2. List characteristics of the word/concept in the upper right box.
3. Write a student friendly definition in the upper left box.
4. Write examples in the lower left box. These are often examples from the students' lives to create personal connections.
5. Write non-examples in the lower right box. These help to avoid misconceptions.

|                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| <b>DEFINITION</b> | <b>CHARACTERISTICS</b> |
| <b>EXAMPLES</b>   | <b>NON-EXAMPLES</b>    |



# Marzano's Six Steps for Effective Vocabulary Instruction



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## Marzano's Six Steps for Effective Vocabulary Instruction

The following steps provide a framework for delivering instructional activities that help students understand new vocabulary terms and recall what they have learned later. For more on this process, see <http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/video/buildingacademic.pdf>.

### Step 1: Describe

- The teacher provides a description, explanation or example of the new term.

### Step 2: Restate

- Students restate the explanation of the new term in their own words.

# Questioning Techniques



- Allow wait time
- Choose your questions carefully
- Think-Pair-Share



# Grouping Students



Intentionally  
group students



Rotate group  
roles during  
projects



# Wrap-Up

- Reflect on the activities you're currently doing with your students.
- What's one strategy you can use from today's training to help build students' background knowledge and academic vocabulary?

