

# Vocabulary Vitamins

## Tips and Techniques for Developing K-6 Students' Word Power

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English Language and Orientation Programs



## Agenda

**Goal:** To explore multiple ways to teach and reinforce vocabulary in grades K through 6

### We will

review what research says about teaching vocabulary and its role in comprehension,

- discuss practical tips and techniques for developing and reinforcing vocabulary (synonyms, antonyms, etc.),
- explore approaches to teaching a text with unfamiliar vocabulary and learn about techniques authors use,
- participate in games and other activities that introduce, teach, and reinforce vocabulary.



## What the Research Says

- Vocabulary knowledge is a **major indicator** of reading comprehension.
- A reader must understand at least **95 percent** of the vocabulary in a text to fully comprehend what is being read.
- New vocabulary words must be taught in context and encountered **multiple times**.
- Both **breadth and depth** of vocabulary knowledge is important.
- Helping to **motivate students** to learn new words and be more aware of words is crucial and can be done at every grade.

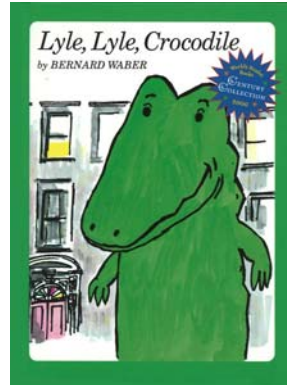
### Polling Question:

In which book would you find the following vocabulary words?

miserable      desperately      glimpse      nervous  
browsing      coaxing      construction      distrustful

- A) *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile*, by Bernard Waber
- B) *Charlotte's Web*, by E. B. White
- C) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll
- D) *The Mousewife*, by Rumer Godden

## Many Books Are Rich in Vocabulary



Lyle wanted desperately to win Loretta over. He tried flashing his sweetest, most toothsome smile at her to show how really friendly he was. But this only frightened the distrustful animal even more.

## Implications for Teaching?

Students are capable of learning new vocabulary words.  
But simply exposing them to new words is not enough.

**Vocabulary Matters!**

## How Do Students Learn New Words?

Students learn most words indirectly through reading and listening to others read to them.

Students need direct instruction to have a thorough understanding of the meanings of new words.

Here are some strategies you might use to teach words:

- **Preview words** in a text in the same context.
- **Use words** in sentences that are related to a text to be read.
- **Write words** for students to see.
- **Model** how to use a word in context with a concept in the text.

## Different Tiers of Words

Isabel Beck divides vocabulary into three tiers:

### Tier Three

nucleus fossil peninsula glacier

### Tier Two

hasty absurd mention crave avid

### Tier One

baby clock happy spoon desk




From *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction* (2002)  
by Isabel L. Beck, Margaret G. McKeown, and Linda Kucan

## Exploring Strategies

### Our Focus → Tier Two Words

Use classic strategies: the classics are still effective.

- Matching synonyms: happy → glad
- Matching antonyms: cold → hot
- Writing the missing word to complete the sentence:  
I was happy when I got an A on my test.
- Matching a picture to a word:  → baby

## Exploring Strategies

### Polling Question:

Which of the classic strategies do you use most often?

- A) matching synonyms
- B) matching antonyms
- C) complete the sentence
- D) a variety of those
- E) others

## Variations

### More Than One Answer

Circle *all* the possible answers:

We ate lunch at the \_\_\_\_\_.

cafeteria	restaurant
diner	snack
dinner	snack bar

## Variations

### Relationships between words

Teach how to think about things by making connections between a word and the context where it is used.

Where would you see

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| A.) a principal? | ___ in a school     |
| B.) a doctor?    | ___ in a court      |
| C.) a waiter?    | ___ in a hospital   |
| D.) a judge?     | ___ in a restaurant |

## Variations

### Collocations (the Act of Placing Together)

Show contextual meaning: teach words and phrases based on how they are often used.

Draw a line to connect the phrases that go together.

- |            |   |            |
|------------|---|------------|
| to achieve | • | • a secret |
| to reveal  | • | • a goal   |
| to grasp   | • | • an idea  |

For younger students:

- |          |   |             |
|----------|---|-------------|
| to raise | • | • a bike    |
| to play  | • | • your hand |
| to ride  | • | • a game    |
| to read  | • | • a snack   |
| to eat   | • | • a book    |

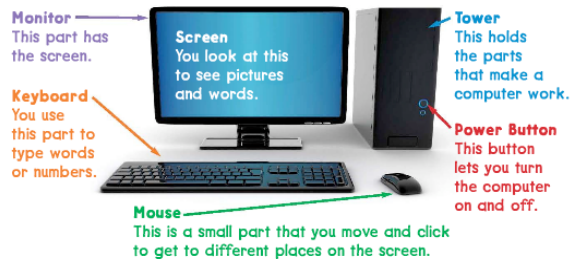
## Variations

### Strategies for Visual Learners

USING A DIAGRAM

#### Look at the Parts of a Computer

Look at the picture, and read the text. Then write the correct word on each line.



1. You turn on the computer with the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. You see pictures on the computer's \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The computer's screen is on the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The computer's \_\_\_\_\_ holds parts that make it work.
5. You can type words on the computer's \_\_\_\_\_.
6. You can move to places on the screen with the \_\_\_\_\_.

**THINK ABOUT IT!** How do you think the computer's mouse got its name?

## Variations

### Strategies for Visual Learners

USING A DIAGRAM

#### A Frog's Busy Body



- Tongue** A long sticky tongue moves out to quickly catch an insect.
- Nostril** Two of these let air in to help a frog breathe.
- Eye** Two eyes help a frog see well at night. They can see to the front and to the side.
- Eardrum** Two of these help a frog hear.
- Skin** Thin, moist skin helps a frog breathe underwater.
- Back Leg** Two long back legs help a frog jump far.

1. These help a frog jump. back legs    nostrils
2. This helps a frog breathe underwater. tongue    skin
3. A frog uses this to catch insects to eat. eye    tongue
4. A frog uses these to breathe. eyes    nostrils
5. A frog can hear sounds with these. nostrils    eardrums

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## Exploring Strategies

### Strategies for Visual Learners

#### Discuss a poem.

**Why INFO ZONE**

# Rain Rhymes

It's pouring poetry! April is about more than just spring showers. It's also National Poetry Month. So grab your umbrellas, and celebrate with this soggy-weather poem written by Leland B. Jacobs.

**Strange Playfellow**

I awoke to hear the rain,  
Tapping on my windowpane.  
Tapping there as if to say,  
"Get your boots and come and play."  
Tapping out a little plea,  
"Come along and play with me."  
But when I dressed and went to play  
That rascal, rain, had run away.

—Leland B. Jacobs

☔ Raindrops have rhythm, or beats, and so do poems. In this poem, each line has seven beats, except for the last two, which each have eight.

☔ A plea (PLEE) is a request.

A playfellow is a friend. Why might Jacobs describe rain as a friend?

Who know rain had something to say? The author uses personification here to describe the drizzle that's calling him outside. Personification is when nonhuman objects are given humanlike qualities.

Jacobs writes in the first person. That is a type of writing told from the author's point of view. The writer refers to himself or herself with words such as I.

Jacobs was more than just a rhyme master. He also worked as a teacher, an elementary school principal, and a college professor. The writer once said his goal as a children's poet was to show kids that reading can be fun. Jacobs died in 1992 at age 85.

**GET WRITING:** Pen your own rainy day poem from the first person.

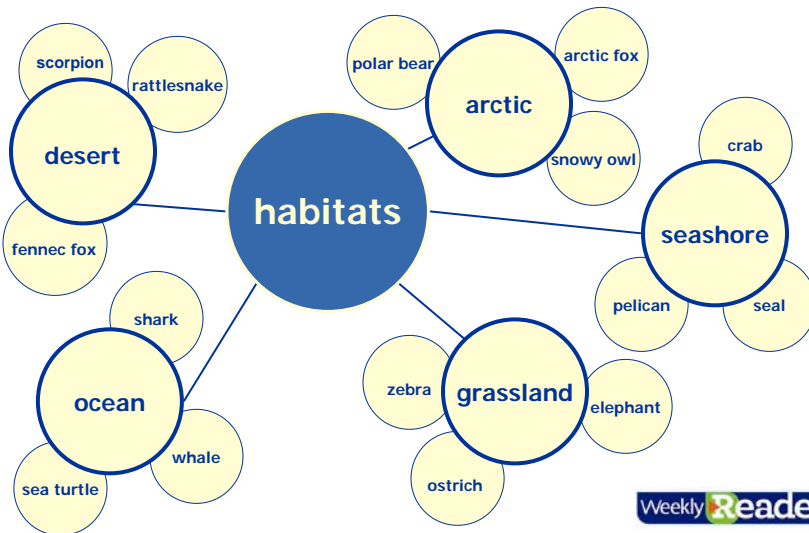
### Strategies for Visual Learners

Draw a bicycle, and label these parts:  
wheels, spokes, handlebars, and seat.



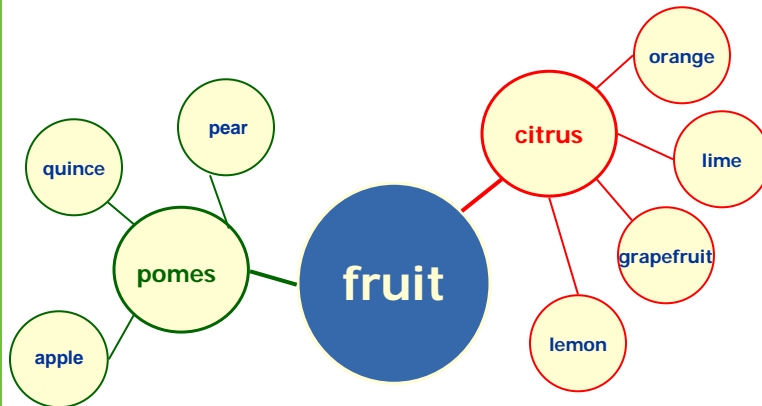
### Strategies for Visual Learners

Semantic Mapping: Provides a Visible Hierarchy of Terms



## Exploring Strategies

### Strategies for Visual Learners (a Simpler Version)



## Exploring Strategies

### Strategies to Reinforce Vocabulary and Concepts

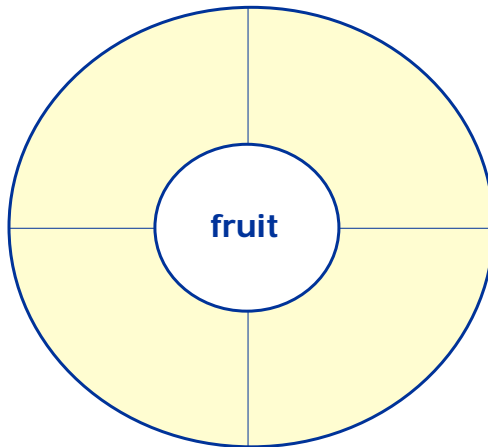
Read the words in each line. Cross out the word that doesn't belong.

uncle	father	aunt	brother
meadow	river	yard	field
subway	plane	train	bus
horse	dog	cow	shark

Exploring Strategies

Strategies to Reinforce Vocabulary and Concepts

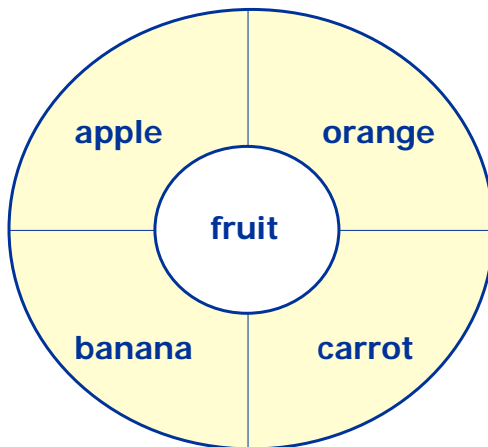
Use a concept circle. Write a word in each of the four sections.



Exploring Strategies

Strategies to Reinforce Vocabulary and Concepts

Use a concept circle. Cross out the word that does not belong.



## Exploring Strategies

### Strategies to Reinforce Word Usage

Give an *example* for each of the following:

Something that tastes **sour** is \_\_\_\_\_.

Something that you think is **amusing** is \_\_\_\_\_.

Something that tastes **scrumptious** is \_\_\_\_\_.

Something that is **hideous** is \_\_\_\_\_.

Something that is **stressful** is \_\_\_\_\_.

Use open-ended sentences or provide a word box:  
**a lemon a cupcake a big rat an exam a funny story**

## Exploring Strategies

### Strategies to Prompt a Writer's Creativity

Guide students in understanding words by  
completing sentences.

I was **upset** when \_\_\_\_\_.

I was **bewildered** by \_\_\_\_\_.

I was **exhausted** after \_\_\_\_\_.

I was so **lucky** when \_\_\_\_\_.

I was **fearful** that \_\_\_\_\_.

## Strategies to Distinguish Shades of Meaning

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hot > warm > lukewarm > cool > cold

downpour > rain > drizzle > mist

great > terrific > good > nice

furious > angry > annoyed

## Strategies to Distinguish Shades of Meaning

---

### Other types of scales

take > grab > seize

call > shout > yell

happy > glad > joyous

## Distinguishing Synonyms

### Strategies to Compare Formal and Informal

List pairs of words. Which word in each pair is slang?  
Which word is more appropriate for a class assignment?

kid / child  
disgusting / gross  
fail / flunk  
wimpy / weak  
expelled / kicked out



## Distinguishing Synonyms

### Strategies to Measure Meaning

List pairs of words. Which word in each pair is stronger, more forceful, or more intense?

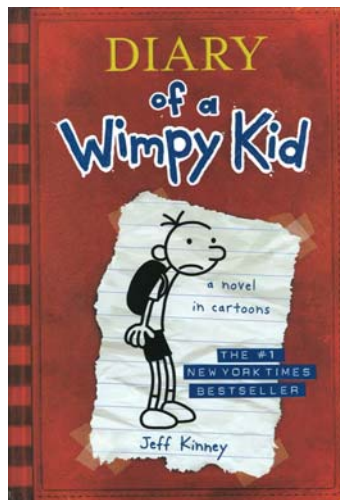
to surprise	to astound
to boil	to simmer
to toss	to throw
to fall	to trip
to call	to yell
to hurl	to throw
to fly	to soar

**Polling Question:** In which book do these words appear?

expectations  
privileges  
fabrication

swarmed  
lurk  
suspended

- A.) *Charlotte's Web*, by E. B. White
- B.) "The Rabbit and the Turtle," by Aesop
- C.) *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, by Jeff Kinney
- D.) *The Wizard of Oz*, by Frank Baum

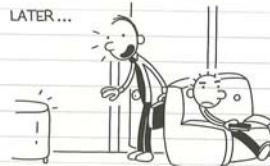


But if there's one thing I learned from Rodrick, it's to set people's expectations real low so you end up surprising them by practically doing nothing at all.

RODRICK, I WANT YOUR DIRTY UNDERWEAR OFF THE KITCHEN TABLE BEFORE I GET HOME FROM WORK.



LATER...



## Exploring Strategies

### Word Search Strategy

- a.** a lie or something that is made up  
Her story about why she did not have her homework was a complete \_\_\_\_\_.
- b.** things to look forward to that might happen  
Ms. Murphy's \_\_\_\_\_ were that all of her students would pass the math test.
- c.** to move around or wait in a hidden position  
Mice like to \_\_\_\_\_ in small dark spaces.
- d.** an extra benefit that's not available to everyone  
Because she is the company president, she gets a discount and has other \_\_\_\_\_.
- e.** to move or gather in a large group  
As the doors opened, shoppers \_\_\_\_\_ into the store.
- f.** to stop for a short time  
The mayor \_\_\_\_\_ the buses going into the tunnel for a week.

**WORD BOX:** expectations swarmed privileges fabrication suspended lurk



## Exploring Strategies

### Strategies for Teaching Emerging Readers

Even the youngest children can learn new vocabulary words. Ask them to explore, touch and use words to describe objects.

**Objects** \_\_\_\_\_  
sandpaper or silk  
rock or cotton  
rope or string

**Word** \_\_\_\_\_  
rough or smooth  
hard or soft  
thick or thin



## Exploring Strategies

### How to Deal With Text With a Lot of Unfamiliar Vocabulary

Reverse dictionary:

Find a word in the first paragraph that means "surprised."

Find an expression in the third paragraph that means "cost too much."

Find a word in the last paragraph that means "does something the same."

## Exploring Strategies

### Teach Students to Make Use of Textual Clues

**Boldface and definition:**

Whales have **blubber** under their skin to keep them warm. Blubber is a thick layer of fat.

**Boldface and synonym:**

The hurricane caused a huge **surge**, or wave of water, to flood the coastal town.

**Include examples:**

Turtles have shells covering their bodies. Other **reptiles**, such as snakes and lizards, have scales on their bodies.

## Example

### Our Solar System

Our solar system is made up of the sun and eight planets. A planet is a large ball made of rock or gas. Each planet orbits, or travels around, the sun. The sun is at the center of the solar system.

The sun is a star. It is a ball of hot gas. It gives off light and heat. Why does the sun look different from other stars? The sun is the star closest to Earth.

**Mercury** is the closest planet to the sun. It is also the smallest. It has mountains and craters. Craters are holes in the ground that were made when space rocks crashed into it.

**Earth** is our home. It is also the only planet with oceans. In fact, Earth is covered mostly with water. That is why it is called the Blue Planet.

**Jupiter** is the largest planet. It is made of thick gases. Very strong winds blow on this planet.

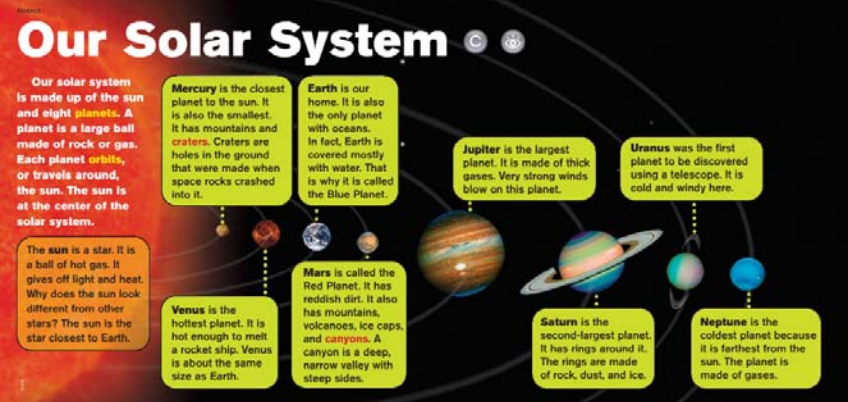
**Uranus** was the first planet to be discovered using a telescope. It is cold and windy here.

**Venus** is the hottest planet. It is hot enough to melt a rocket ship. Venus is about the same size as Earth.

**Mars** is called the Red Planet. It has reddish dirt. It also has mountains, volcanoes, ice caps, and canyons. A canyon is a deep, narrow valley with steep sides.

**Saturn** is the second-largest planet. It has rings around it. The rings are made of rock, dust, and ice.

**Neptune** is the coldest planet because it is farthest from the sun. The planet is made of gases.




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## Example

### Solar Power

**solar panels**




The sun gives Earth heat and light. Some homes have solar panels on the roof. The panels collect sunlight and turn it into **electricity**. That is a kind of energy. It lets people do many things. For example, we use electricity to light our homes and watch television. Solar power can also be used to warm up the water in our homes.




The Antro Solo is a solar-powered car.

### Wind Power

Wind turbines are often as tall as 20-story buildings. The blades can be more than 100 feet long.



People can turn wind energy into electricity. Wind turbines are machines that spin when the wind blows. They make electricity. Wind turbines are grouped together in wind farms. Some wind farms have hundreds of wind turbines. The Roscoe Wind Farm in Texas has 627 turbines. They can power 230,000 homes.



THINK ABOUT IT! What are some ways you can save energy?

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## Exploring Strategies

### Teach Students to Make Use of Other Text Features

Photos

Illustrations

Charts

Diagrams

Graphs

Chapter headings (fiction and nonfiction)

## Context Clues

### Model Words in Cause and Effect Sentences

Because we **lingered** at the restaurant, we missed the start of the movie.

The door was **ajar**, so the dog got out of the house.

The little girl **stumbled**, and she hurt her knee.

## Context Clues

### Model Words Using Opposites or Contrasts

I studied for hours, but I still **flunked** the test.

Even though Sam is a **novice** skier, he didn't fall down once on his first time on the slope.

She peered into the **window**, but she still could not see whether anyone was home.

The apple pie was **scrumptious**, but the whipped cream tasted sour.

## Context Clues

### Use Sentences That Show a Specific Category

The **baboon**, like other apes, is a social animal.

Toads, frogs, and other **amphibians** can live in water and on land.

Sally's flower garden was filled with rows of **marigolds**, which she **tended** with great care.

Samuel was a great **architect**, and his buildings were beautifully designed.

## Context Clues

### Ask: What Kind of Word Is It?

**Noun** – a person, place, thing, or idea?

**Verb** – an action of some kind?

**Adjective** – what is it describing?  
It is good or bad, a size, color, etc.

**Adverb** – what verb or adjective is it describing?

## Context Clues

### Teach Meaning From Context

Each summer thousands of tourists **flock** to the beaches of Cape Cod.

The father **tossed** the ball to the little boy.

The snake **slithered** through the grass.

The woman took her shoes to the **cobbler** to have them repaired.

The pool rules **prohibit** people from running near the pool.

## Exploring Strategies

### Use a Knowledge Rating Guide

This helps students and teachers understand which words students know and which words they don't know.

#### Knowledge Rating Chart

Word	I know it!	I have seen it or heard it.	I have never seen it.

Blachowicz, C.L.Z. (1986)

## Games

### Time for Fun and Games

#### Pantomime (Charades or Acting Out)

Write each sentence on a card. Hand out the cards to students. Ask the other students to identify what each student is doing.

Open the door **cautiously**.

Walk across the room **fearfully**.

Storm out of the room **angrily**.

Pour the water **carefully**.

**Time for Fun and Games**

**Category Game (The \$10,000 Pyramid)**

Write several categories on index cards.

Student give examples of the category.

One student tries to infer the category from the examples.

*For example:*

- Things that are red (or green, white, yellow ...)
- Things that are fragile (or soft, made of glass, ...)
- Places where you have to stand in line
- Things that are round

**Time for Fun and Games**

**Magic Square on Birds:**

Put the number in the proper space. If the totals of the numbers are the same across and down, you have found the magic number.

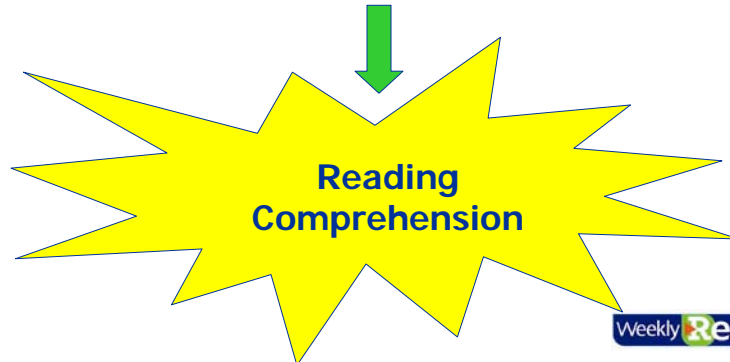
A 7	B 3	C 5
D 2	E 4	F 9
G 6	H 8	I 1

- A. Birds build these
- B. Birds lay these
- C. Covering of birds
- D. Black and white bird
- E. Bird with huge beak
- F. Red bird
- G. City bird
- H. Our country's bird
- I. Big black bird

1. Raven
2. Penguin
3. Eggs
4. Toucan
5. Feathers
6. Pigeon
7. Nest
8. Eagle
9. Cardinal

## Vocabulary Vitamins → Reading Comprehension

Vocabulary words taught in context + Multiple Encounters = Word Knowledge  
Breadth + Depth of vocabulary knowledge = Deeper Understanding  
Word Awareness = Motivation to Learn Words



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I get it now!

Our primary goal is to improve student performance.



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**Thank you for participating in this webinar!**

**“To see a child learn is to see a miracle unfold.”**

~Anna Rosewell



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## Presenter

### Extending the Conversation

**Speaker:** Joseph Pettigrew has taught English as a second language at Boston University's Center for English Language and Orientation Programs for nearly 25 years. He has taught reading, writing, listening, speaking, and vocabulary to students from many different countries, including ones in Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. He has given presentations on various topics to elementary, secondary, and higher education teachers. His interests include vocabulary instruction, cross-cultural issues, and technology in the classroom. He has a master's degree in linguistics from Ohio State University and a master's degree in teaching ESL from Boston University.

You can reach Joe Pettigrew at [jpettigr@bu.edu](mailto:jpettigr@bu.edu).

Share your experiences, ask questions, and extend this conversation about vocabulary so we can share and learn from one another.

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## Thank you for attending this Weekly Reader webinar.

This webinar was recorded. A link to the recorded session will be sent to all participants.

Stay in touch to find out about upcoming webinars!

For more information about Weekly Reader webinars, go to [www.weeklyreader.com/webinars](http://www.weeklyreader.com/webinars).

### Please stay tuned...

A brief product demonstration of Weekly Reader Connect will follow.

[www.wrconnect.com](http://www.wrconnect.com)



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