

Meaning Vocabulary: Direct Explanation Method

LESSON MODEL FOR

Contextualized Vocabulary

Benchmarks

- Ability to develop in-depth knowledge of many word meanings
- Ability to improve story comprehension

Strategy Grade Level

- Pre-K-Grade 2

Grouping

- Whole class
- Small group or pairs
- Individual

Sample Text

- Read-Aloud—
“Common Sense: An Anansi Tale”

Materials

- None

This lesson model is based on a research-based method developed by Catherine Boote and Andrew Biemiller (Biemiller and Boote 2006; Boote 2006). It is especially appropriate for accelerating vocabulary acquisition in preliterate students who are not reading and/or decoding independently, have impoverished vocabularies, or need a boost. Using the direct explanation method, the teacher reads aloud a story four separate times over a three-day period, introducing up to 25 teachable words per selection. Other words are explained for comprehension only, all from the story context. On the fourth or last day of the sequence, the teachable words are cumulatively reviewed. Using sample text, this lesson model provides an example of how to introduce a large number of previously selected teachable words. The same model can be adapted and used to enhance vocabulary instruction linked to the read-aloud stories and informational books in any commercial reading program.



Select the Words

In this method, two types of words are introduced and explained: teachable words and comprehension words.

Teachable Words

Generally, teachable words are introduced and explained during the reading of a story and then reviewed. During the second, third, and fourth read-alouds, up to eight new teachable words are introduced. Teachable words are selected at the appropriate level from the Dale-Chall List of 3,000 Words Known by Students in Grade 4 (Chall and Dale 1995) and *Words; Teaching: Closing the Vocabulary Gap* (Biemiller 2010).

Teachable Title Words Some teachable words are introduced before the first read-aloud. These are words whose meanings are crucial to the overall understanding of the story. Often, as in this sample text, the pre-taught word is in the story title.

Comprehension Words

Some words are important to the comprehension of the text, but they are not identified as teachable words from the list of level appropriate words in *Words Worth Teaching*. The meanings of these words are briefly explained for comprehension before each read-aloud; they are not reviewed afterward.

BEFORE READING-Introduce the Teachable Title Word

In this sample text "Common Sense: An Anansi Tale," the first teachable word or term, common sense, is found in the story title. Briefly introduce the term common sense before the first reading because the concept is crucial to overall understanding of the story. Say: Today we are going to read a story called "*Common Sense: An Anansi Tale*." Having common sense means that you are able to make good decisions naturally. Making good decisions is not necessarily something you learn in school. For example, it is common sense to turn on a light when it gets too dark to read or to wear a coat when it is cold outside.

Introduce the Comprehension Words

Now introduce the comprehension words *calabash* and *prank*. Say: *Knowing the meaning of calabash and prank will help you to understand the story. A calabash is like a big pumpkin. Some of you may know the Spanish word for calabash-calabaza. A prank is a silly trick done mostly for fun, like taping a "kick me" or "feed me" sign onto someone's back.*

READ THE STORY ALOUD

Read the whole story aloud without pausing for word-meaning explanations. Students are unlikely to ask for word meanings while a story is being read (Biemiller and Boote 2006).

DURING READING-Introduce the Teachable Words

Read the story aloud again. As you read the story, stop to introduce the first eight teachable words (paragraphs 1 & 2). To introduce each word, reread the sentence in which the word appears and then provide a brief student-friendly explanation to give meaning to the word. Try not to give meaning to a word by using an explanation that contains unknown words. Say: *We are going to read the Anansi story again, but this time as I am going to stop and explain some words that you might not know.* When you come to the first teachable word, mischief, reread the sentence: "Anansi, the spider, was full of mischief" Then say "*Let me tell you that someone who is full of mischief likes to have fun by playing tricks on people. It's like playful misbehavior.*" Then continue reading aloud, following the same procedure with remaining seven words.

AFTER READING-Check Comprehension

Check students' understanding of the story by asking one or two comprehension questions. For example, ask:

- *Why does Anansi want all the common sense for himself?*
- *Where do we learn common sense?*

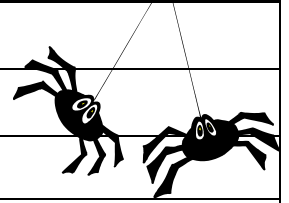
Review the Teachable Words

Review the eight newly introduced teachable words by repeating their meanings and adding them to the story word list. For example, ask: *Do you remember the word mischief? On the story word list, print mischief below common sense. Pointing to mischief, ask: Do you remember that mischief means playful misbehavior-like playing tricks on people?* Follow the same procedure with the remaining seven words. Display the story word list where it is highly visible to all students. Refer to the list whenever possible throughout the week.



Glossary: Teachable Words for “Common Sense: An Anansi Tale”

Common Sense	Being able to make good decisions naturally
Mischief	Liking to have fun by playing tricks on people; playful misbehavior
Judgment	Making a decision after thinking carefully about something
Sensible	Showing good sense; a sensible person makes good decisions
Information	Knowing or learning facts about something
Imagined (imagine)	To picture something in your mind
Simplest (simple)	Easy to understand
Brilliant	Very good, clever, or smart
Scheme	A secret and sneaky plan
Spied (spy)	To notice something
Vine	A plant that climbs up or hangs down
Stuffed (stuff)	To fill tightly or overfill something
Waded (wade)	A walk through water that is not deep
Trudged (trudge)	To walk slowly with heavy steps, usually because you are tired
Hedge	A row of bushes along the edge of a garden, field or road
Steep	Goes up very suddenly
Valuable	Very useful and important
Thick	Big around and strong
Dangled (dangle)	To hang or swing loosely from somewhere
Swayed (sway)	To swing slowly from one side to the other
Struggling (struggle)	To have a hard time with something; to try very hard to do something
Foolish	Not showing good common sense
Temper	Becoming angry very easily; angry feelings
Might	Power of strength
Shattered (shatter)	To break into a lot of small pieces



Visual Clue
Show a picture of a vine

Visual Clue
Demonstrate Trudging

Visual Clue
Use your hand to show a sudden angle