


Common Core Instruction for ELA & Literacy Academic Vocabulary, 6-12 ELA & Content Area Teachers

 Area 7 Regional Superintendents of Schools
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Module 1:
**Common Core Instruction
for ELA & Literacy**

Academic Vocabulary
Audience: 6-12 ELA & Content Area Teachers

Expected outcomes

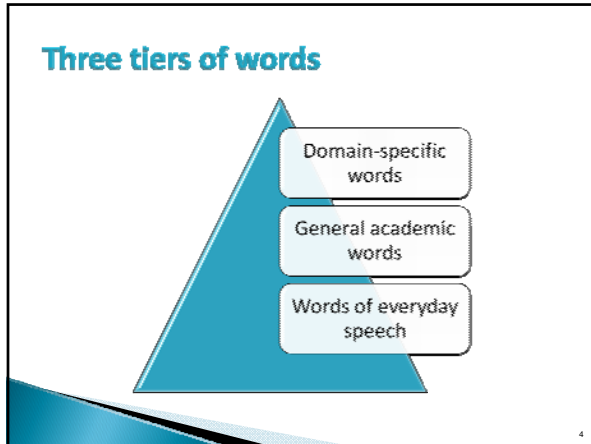
- ▶ Become familiar with the concept of academic vocabulary (Tier 2 words) and why it is important to teach
- ▶ Become familiar with criteria for selecting Tier 2 words for explicit instruction
- ▶ Explore some strategies and resources for teaching Tier 2 words

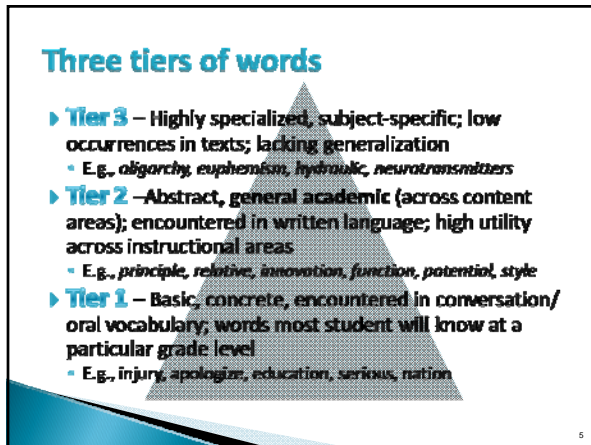
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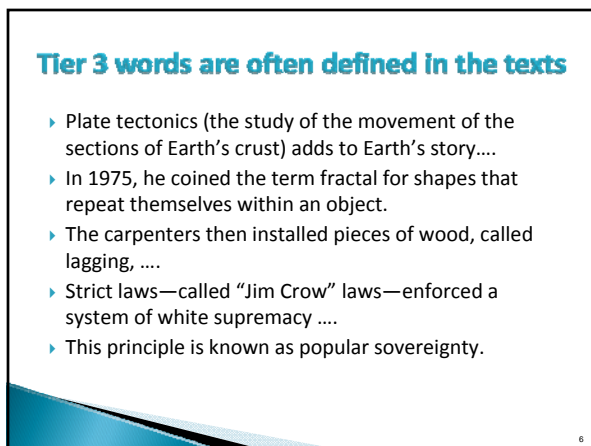
Language Anchor Standard 6

- ▶ “Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases ...”

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Why are “academic words” important?

- ▶ Are critical to understanding academic texts
- ▶ Appear in all sorts of texts and are highly generalizable
- ▶ Require deliberate effort to learn, unlike Tier 1 words
- ▶ Are far more likely to appear in written texts than in speech.
- ▶ Often represent subtle or precise ways to say otherwise relatively simple things
- ▶ Are seldom heavily scaffolded by authors or teachers, unlike Tier 3 words

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Careful selection of words to teach

- ▶ In school settings, students can be explicitly taught a deep understanding of about 300 words each year.
- ▶ Divided by the range of content students need to know (e.g., math, science, history, literature), of these 300–350 words, roughly 60 words can be taught within one subject area each year.
- ▶ It is reasonable to teach thoroughly about eight to ten words per week.

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Criteria for selecting words to teach

- ▶ Importance of the word for understanding the text
 - What does the word choice bring to the meaning of the text? (E.g., precision, specificity?)
- ▶ General utility of the word
 - Is it a word that students are likely to see often in other texts? Are there multiple meanings?
 - Will it be of use to students in their own writing?
- ▶ Students’ prior knowledge of the word and the concept(s) to which it relates
 - How does the word relate to other words, ideas, or experiences that the students know or have been learning?
 - Are there opportunities for grouping words together to enhance understanding of a concept?

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Activity: Categorize vocabulary

With partners, read the selections and identify

- ▶ Tier 3 words
 - Important to the concept under study
 - Unlikely to appear in texts on other subjects
- ▶ Tier 2 words
 - Unfamiliar to most students at this level
 - Likely to appear in texts on other subjects
 - May have multiple meanings
 - Can be grouped with other known ideas, words for instruction
- ▶ A few Tier 1 words
 - Familiar to most students at this level, but likely to require attention for English language learners

Tier 3 Words

- ▶ Innumeracy
 - additivity, innumerates
 - nanoseconds, fulcrum
- ▶ Evolution of the Grocery Bag
 - _____
 - _____
- ▶ Biography of the Fish...
 - _____
 - _____
- ▶ What They Fought For
 - _____
 - _____

Tier 1 Words

- ▶ Innumeracy
 - lever, bottleneck, vastness,
 - pronouncement, resisted
- ▶ Evolution of the Grocery Bag
 - _____
 - _____
- ▶ Biography of the Fish...
 - _____
 - _____
- ▶ What They Fought For
 - _____
 - _____

Activity: Select Tier 2 words to teach

- ▶ The word is central to understanding the text.
- ▶ The word choice and nuance are significant.
- ▶ Students are likely to see this word frequently.
- ▶ Students will be able to use this word when writing in response to the text.
- ▶ It is a more mature or precise label for concepts students already have under control.
- ▶ The word lends itself to teaching a web of words and concepts around it.



Tier 2 words in “Innumeracy”

- ▶ Central to the meaning of the text
 - Dimensions, property, principle
- ▶ Nuance, impact of word choice
 - Intractable
- ▶ Frequency
 - Fundamental
- ▶ More precise label for known concepts
 - Depletion, phenomena
- ▶ Lend themselves to teaching a web of words
 - Millennia, minuscule, nanoseconds, microphysics

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Vocabulary instruction in both

- ▶ Meaning of specific words
 - Provide student-friendly definition(s)
 - Read the word in text
 - Discuss examples and non-examples of the word
 - Create semantic maps
 - Teach multiple meanings
 - Link new words to words students already know (CCSS Language Standard 5)
- ▶ Word-learning strategies
 - By using contextual cues
 - By using their existing knowledge of words and word parts (CCSS Language Standard 4)

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Explicit instruction checklist

- ▶ Set a purpose for learning
 - Learn that in science phenomena are observable events or facts, no matter how common, while in general use, it refers only to remarkable occurrences or people.
- ▶ Identify critical details that define the new concept
 - Science – can be perceived by the senses
 - General use – exceptional, outstanding, unusual, extraordinary
- ▶ Use highly specific examples and non-examples
 - Science – combustion, gravity, respiration, light/ philosophy, sadness
 - General use – a genius, a record-setting athletic performance/ gravity
- ▶ Connect new concepts to previously learned material

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Practice, Review, and Deep Processing

- ▶ Sufficient to enable a student to know and use vocabulary without hesitation
- ▶ Distributed over time
- ▶ Cumulative, with vocabulary integrated into more complex tasks
- ▶ Varied so vocabulary use can be applied to multiple contexts

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How did we do?

- ▶ *What is one difference between Tier 3 and Tier 2 words?*
- ▶ *Why is it important to teach Tier 2 words?*
- ▶ *What are two criteria to consider when selecting Tier 2 words to teach in depth?*
- ▶ *What are some instructional procedures or strategies to include when teaching general academic vocabulary?*

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Suggested follow-up activities

- ▶ In grade level or subject area teams, analyze one or more core texts for Tier 2 and Tier 3 words. Plan instruction, review, and practice for Tier 2 words.
- ▶ In teams, discuss opportunities for students to review and practice using new academic vocabulary across subject areas and/or grade levels.

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