

THE ABC's of Vocabulary

A. Why teach vocabulary?

“Vocabulary is the best single indicator of intellectual ability and an accurate predictor of success at school.” W.B. Elley--language expert

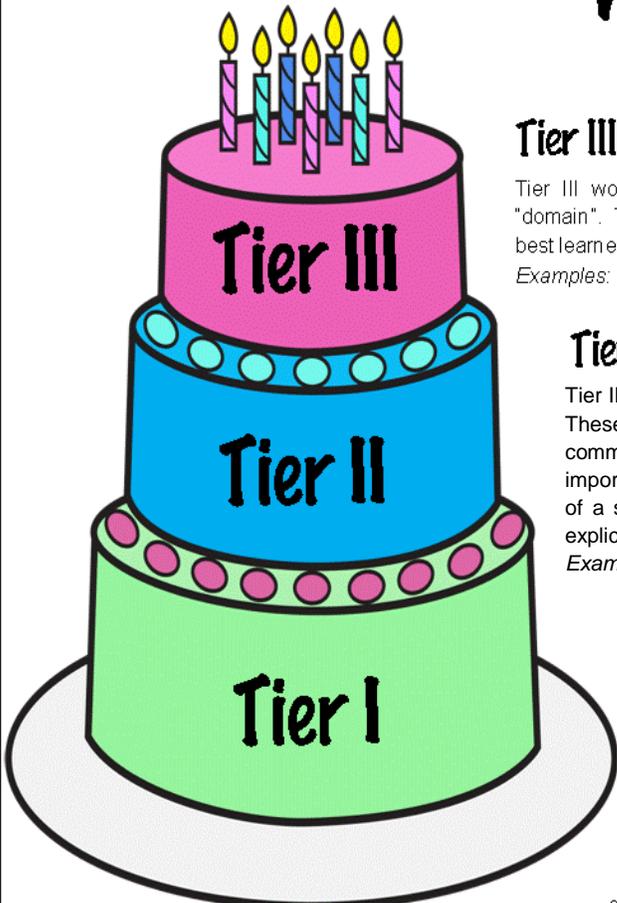
Studies have shown that vocabulary and reading comprehension are strongly correlated, and researchers have found that word knowledge in primary grades can predict how well students will be able to comprehend texts in high school.

B. What vocabulary words should I teach?

Focus instruction on *Tier II* vocabulary words.

Vocabulary Instruction

Choosing Words to Teach



Tier III

Tier III words are low-frequency words and are limited to a specific "domain". They often pertain to a specific content area. These words are best learned within the context of the lesson or subject matter.
Examples: atom, molecule, metamorphic, sedimentary, continent

Tier II

Tier II words are high-frequency words that occur across contexts. These words are used by mature language users and are more common in writing than in everyday speech. Tier II words are important for students to know in order to enhance comprehension of a selected text. Tier II words are the best words for targeted explicit vocabulary in instruction.
Examples: hilarious, endure, despise, arrange, compare, contrast

Tier I

Tier I words are the words we use everyday in our speech. These words are typically learned through conversation. These are common words that rarely require direct instruction.
Examples: come, see, happy, table

www.blog.maketaketeach.com

Source: Bringing Words To Life (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan 2002)

C. How should I teach vocabulary?

High quality vocabulary instruction:

- **encourages a variety of reading.** Children should read and hear books with powerful language from different genres (i.e., biographies, informational, primary sources, mysteries, science fiction, poetry, etc.).
- **includes planned teaching of selected words.** Some direct instruction is useful. Purposely foster an awareness of words and word parts. An excellent resource is the following website that lists *15 Strategies in 15 Minutes*.
<http://learningtasks.weebly.com/vocabulary-strategies.html>
- **integrates into other academic subject areas.** To learn new words--really learn them--requires students to connect new and existing knowledge. Students need to use new words in context and think about them in meaningful ways. The following link has vocabulary lists from numerous literature and nonfiction sources.
<http://www.vocabulary.com/lists/>
- **includes repetition.** Students should be *immersed* in words. Looking up words in a dictionary and learning definitions are not enough to ensure word learning. The link below has a variety of lists with online games.
http://www.spellingcity.com/index.php?option=com_spellcity&controller=search&task=spellingListSearch

**Ask your Education Coordinator about curriculum programs that are available at the Hickman Annex.*

Practice identifying *Tier II* words by using the reading samples located in the purple ELA packet. There are two reading samples:

1. **(Grades 1-5) “Inventions: Then and Now”**

For example: discover

2. **(Grades 6-8) “California and Mesopotamia-Similarities and Differences”.**

For example: economic
