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Active Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary should be part of every plan for writing. Vocabulary instruction and collection as prewriting strategies directly affect the quality of the finished writing product.

Vocabulary development has four levels: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing vocabulary is the slowest to develop. The students automatically develop writing vocabulary if they are actively and frequently engaged in writing, but they may not be aware of it. They will benefit from direct instruction in writing vocabulary by learning categories of words, including sensory vocabulary (pages 20–22), STAR vocabulary (pages 23–24), transitional words and phrases (page 25), synonyms (pages 26–27), word clusters (page 28), and thematic vocabulary (pages 29–30).

Using ideas from this chapter, the teacher can gradually build word banks (e.g., word walls, student word reference sheets) as the students acquire words. As words are added, tell the students that these words are essential for writers to know and use.

Writer’s Vocabulary

Third grade students will develop writing vocabulary during the first part of the year. To facilitate the development of a writing vocabulary, the teacher should begin making word banks. Try using the categories on pages 21–22. Around the middle of third grade, provide the students with these lists to store in their binders as references for spelling.

STAR Vocabulary

STAR stands for **S**ensory, **T**echnical, **A**ctive, and **R**eal Talk vocabulary words. This acronym helps the students remember to collect vocabulary from a variety of sources in preparation for writing. After the teacher establishes a topic for writing, the students are guided to brainstorm vocabulary related to that topic, which also fits under a STAR vocabulary category (see pages 23–24).

Transitional Words and Phrases

Transitional vocabulary assists organization and provides flow to written work. Transitional words and phrases show how ideas are related. The relationships may be based on concepts such as time, space, or comparison (see page 25).

Along with the students, the teacher should create word bank categories for transitional words and phrases. Develop these lists over time as the students acquire them in content vocabulary.

Thematic Vocabulary

Vocabulary development in this text will focus mainly on categories of words (see Vivid Vocabulary on pages 29–30 for samples of word categories). However, word study in any of the forms below increases overall word knowledge:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| • affixes | • compound words | • onsets | • homographs |
| • antonyms | • prefixes | • 50-cent words | • rimes |
| • word families | • homonyms | • suffixes | • rhymes |

Sensory Vocabulary Chart

Help your students practice developing sensory vocabulary using the blank chart below, or create your own on an overhead transparency for the students to see. Select a topic and guide the class to collect words for each column. (See the example below.) Motion words refer to the sensation of movement. Emotion words are also sensory because emotions are felt or sensed. Not all categories will have entries in the columns.

Swimming in a Pond

Subject

See	Hear	Touch	Smell & Taste	Motion	Emotion
water	splashing	damp	pond smell	diving	fear
fish	laughing	cold	fish smell	floating	excitement
frogs	shouts	fish		running	happiness
insects		slimy			joy
rocks		slick			fun
logs					

Subject

See	Hear	Touch	Smell & Taste	Motion	Emotion

Writer's Vocabulary: Sensory Words

Sight Words			Sound Words		
Appearance	Color	Movement	Loud Sounds	Soft Sounds	Voice Sounds
bent	aqua	bounce	bang	buzz	bark
brilliant	beige	crawl	blaring	chime	chant
clear	black	creep	boom	chirp	chatter
dazzling	blue	curl	clash	clink	cheer
dull	brass	dart	crack	groan	chuckle
faded	bronze	dash	crash	grunt	cluck
flat	dark	dive	deafening	gurgle	coo
freckled	emerald	drift	echo	hum	cry
fresh	gold	drive	grate	jingle	giggle
giant	green	flip	howl	moan	growl
gigantic	light	gallop	jangle	mumble	guffaw
jagged	lime	nod	knock	murmur	gurgle
lumpy	mauve	poke	pop	mutter	hiss
messy	navy	scramble	racket	patter	howl
misty	orange	sneak	rap	peep	laugh
mound	pastel	sprint	roar	rustle	puff
muddy	pearl	stroll	rumble	sigh	raspy
opaque	purple	swoop	scream	swish	scratchy
round	red	trot	screech	tinkle	sing
shabby	silver	twirl	slam	twitter	snicker
shiny	teal	wade	squawk	whimper	snort
squiggly	tone	wiggle	thud	whine	stammer
striped	turquoise	yawn	wail	whir	throaty
twinkle	white	zip	whoop	whisper	trill
wavy	yellow	zoom	yell	whistle	yodel

STAR Vocabulary

Make four columns on the board, overhead, or chart paper. Write the headings *Sensory*, *Technical*, *Active*, and *Real Talk* at the head of the columns.

Based on a specific topic, guide the students to develop a list of **sensory** words for the Sensory column. The sensory vocabulary includes see, hear, taste, touch, smell, motion, and emotion words. Then, help the students generate a list of **technical** terms relevant to the topic for the Technical column. For example, technical vocabulary for a story about a zoo might include *veterinarian* and *zookeeper*. Next, help the students realize that writing needs active voice by creating a list of **active** movement words in the Active column. After that, guide the students to write phrases that characters in that story genre might say. Record these in the Real Talk section. Some words will overlap columns; those words are probably the best choices to use in the paragraph, story, or essay.

Trip to the Zoo			
Sensory Words	Technical Words	Active Words	Real Talk
animal sounds aviary crowds elephants hay hot sun laughter	carnivore diet habitat safari veterinarian zookeeper	feeding climbing flying screeching sightseeing taking pictures trumpeting	“Look at that tropical bird.” “Don’t feed the animals!” “Let’s go to the panda exhibit next.”

Demonstrate that STAR vocabulary lists can be made anywhere—on the board, an overhead transparency, blank sheets of paper, or poster boards. At first, the students will need the STAR Vocabulary sheet on page 24. As the students assimilate the idea of STAR vocabulary, they may no longer need the form but will be able to create appropriate lists on their own.

Encourage the students to include STAR vocabulary terms in their first draft. After finishing the draft, have each student compare his or her draft with the list again and try to fit in more vocabulary as appropriate. Pumping up vocabulary improves the quality of writing!

Note: Type and copy lists for the students to keep in their binders. These word lists will be resources for future writing.

