



# Evidence-Based Facilitator Guide: Improving Intermediate Literacy

## Recommendation 1. Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

*Updated December 2022*



Photo is for illustrative purposes only.  
Any person depicted in the photo is a model.

# An important insight



14% of American adults are unable perform functional reading tasks such as reading medicine labels and train schedules. Another 29% are at 'basic' levels ... and do not read or write well enough to perform the literacy requirements of a typical job."

(Moats, 2020)



# The literacy challenge is real



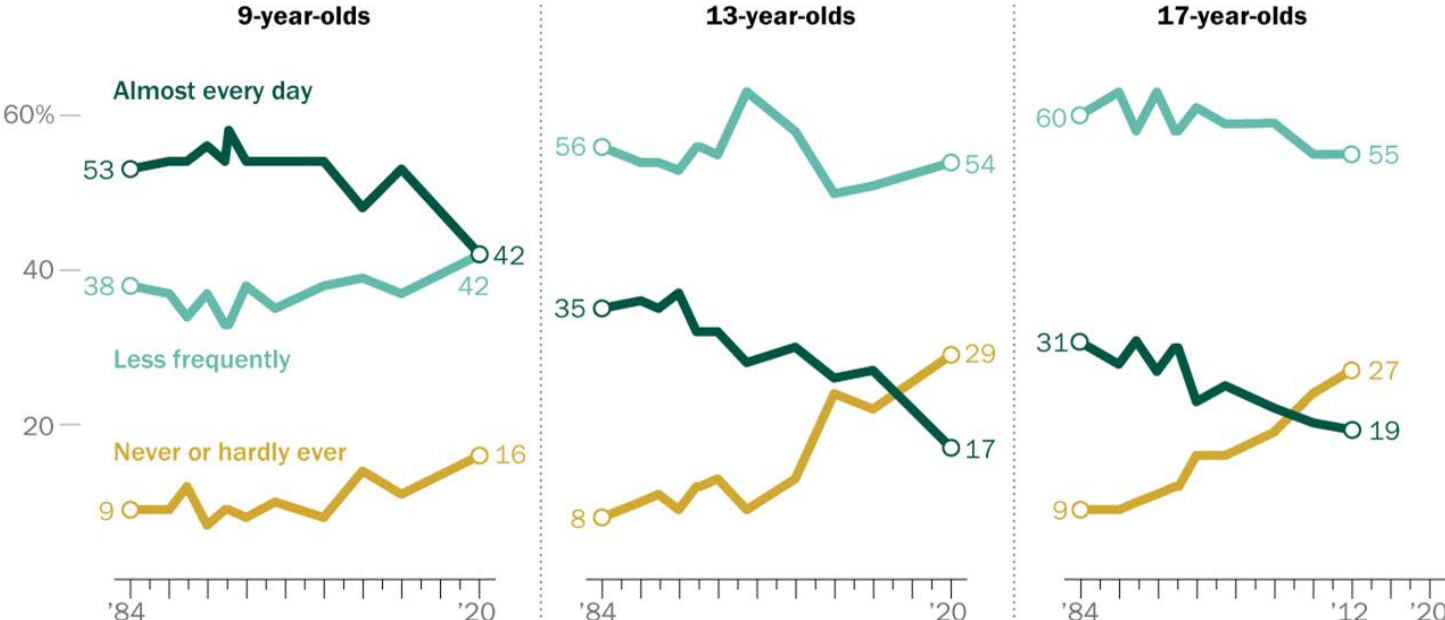
# 1 in 4 children in America grow up without learning how to read



**Overall, 42 percent of fourth-graders read recreationally “almost every day” compared with only 17 percent of eighth-graders.**

**U.S. 9- and 13-year-olds read for fun less often than they used to**

*% of U.S. students of each age who say they read for fun \_\_\_\_, by year*



Note: 2020 assessment was not fielded to 17-year-olds. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding. “Less frequently” combines responses of “once or twice a week,” “once or twice a month” and “a few times a year.”

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2020 Long-Term Trend Reading Assessment.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



*(Pew Research Center (National Center for Educational Statistics), 2020)*

**Students who don't read proficiently by third grade are four times likelier to drop out of school**



*(Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011)*



# A close relationship between illiteracy and crime



Eighty-five percent of all juveniles who interface with the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate.”

*(WriteExpress Corporation)*



# Teaching reading: If not me, then who?



Learning to read is critical to a child's overall well-being. If a youngster does not learn to read in a literacy-driven society, hope for a fulfilling, productive life diminishes."

*G. Reid Lyon*

*Former Chief of the Child Development and Behavior Branch of  
the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development*





# Why focus on improving literacy instruction?

The teacher is the most important factor in student learning.  
If not me, then who?



# Good instruction is powerful

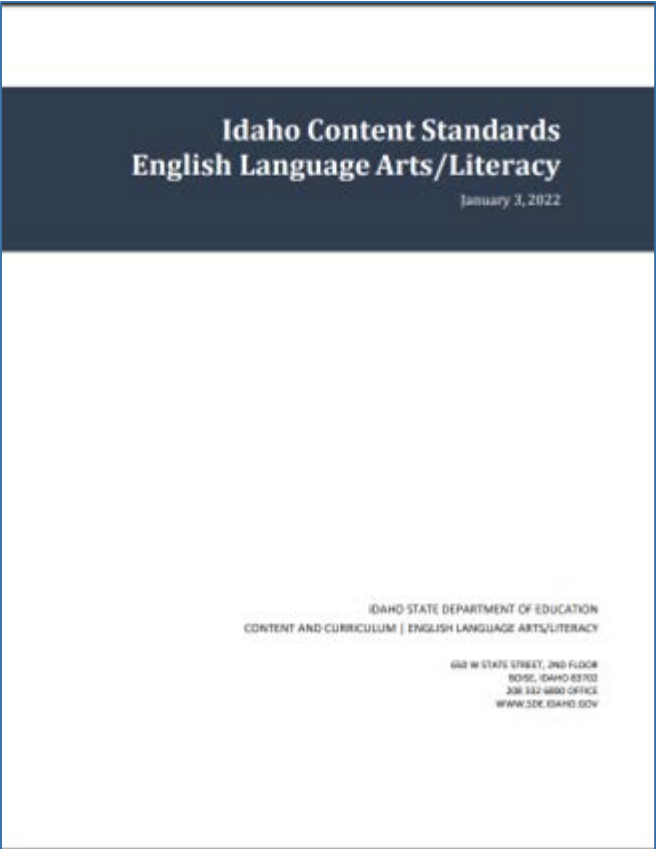
“

Good instruction is the most powerful means of developing proficient comprehenders and preventing reading comprehension problems.”

*(Snow, 2002)*



# Idaho Content Standards



*(Idaho State Department of Education, 2022a, Idaho State Department of Education 2022b)*

# Idaho's 2022 English language arts/literacy standards highlights

Recommendations	New Standards Application
Comprehensive review of the College and Career Readiness Anchor (CCRA) standards	CCRA standards were removed
Remove or move the standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects	Standards for literacy in content areas were removed
Reduce the number of standards, lessen complex verbiage, and prioritize the more important concepts	Reduced total number of standards Reorganization of strands (foundational skills, reading comprehension, and vocabulary development)



# Idaho's 2022 English language arts/literacy standards highlights

Recommendations	New Standards Application
Review classifications of literature and informational text to give a better balance of genres	Sub strands were re-named literature and non-fiction
Balance fiction and non-fiction reading materials, emphasizing value-rich, historically important, and uplifting literature	Reading lists were removed from standards and all appendices at the direction of the 2021 legislative letter
Reevaluate the categories of reading, writing, speaking, listening. Combine some standards in reading, listening, writing, speaking	New strands and sub strands were developed (research strand combines reading and writing, vocabulary development strand combines reading and language)



# Grade band Language standards and strands



# Vertically aligned grade band Language strands and standard strands

Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Foundational Reading Skills (Phonics and Decoding)				
Reading Comprehension (Text Complexity; Volume of Reading to Build Knowledge; Textual Evidence; Reading Fluency; Literature; Nonfiction Text)				
Vocabulary Development (Word Building; Academic Vocabulary)				
Research (Inquiry Process to Build, Present and Use Knowledge; Deep Reading on Texts to Build Knowledge)				
Writing (Range of Writing; Handwriting and Keyboarding)				
Oral and Digital Communications (Oral Communications; Digital Communications)				
Grammar and Conventions (Grammar and Usage; Mechanics)				



# Sample aligned standards for grades 4-8

<b>Grade 4</b>	4.RC-TC.1. 1. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend texts representing a balance of genres, cultures, and perspectives that exhibit complexity at the lower end of the grades 4–5 band.
<b>Grade 5</b>	5.RC-TC.1. 1. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend texts representing a balance of genres, cultures, and perspectives that exhibit complexity at the higher end of the grades 4–5 band.
<b>Grade 6</b>	6.RC-TC.1.1. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend texts representing a balance of genres, cultures, and perspectives that exhibit complexity at the lower end of the grades 6–8 band.
<b>Grade 7</b>	7.RC-TC.1.1. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend texts representing a balance of genres, cultures, and perspectives that exhibit complexity at the midrange of the grades 6–8 band.
<b>Grade 8</b>	8.RC-TC.1.1. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend texts representing a balance of genres, cultures, and perspectives that exhibit complexity at the higher end of the grades 6–8 band.



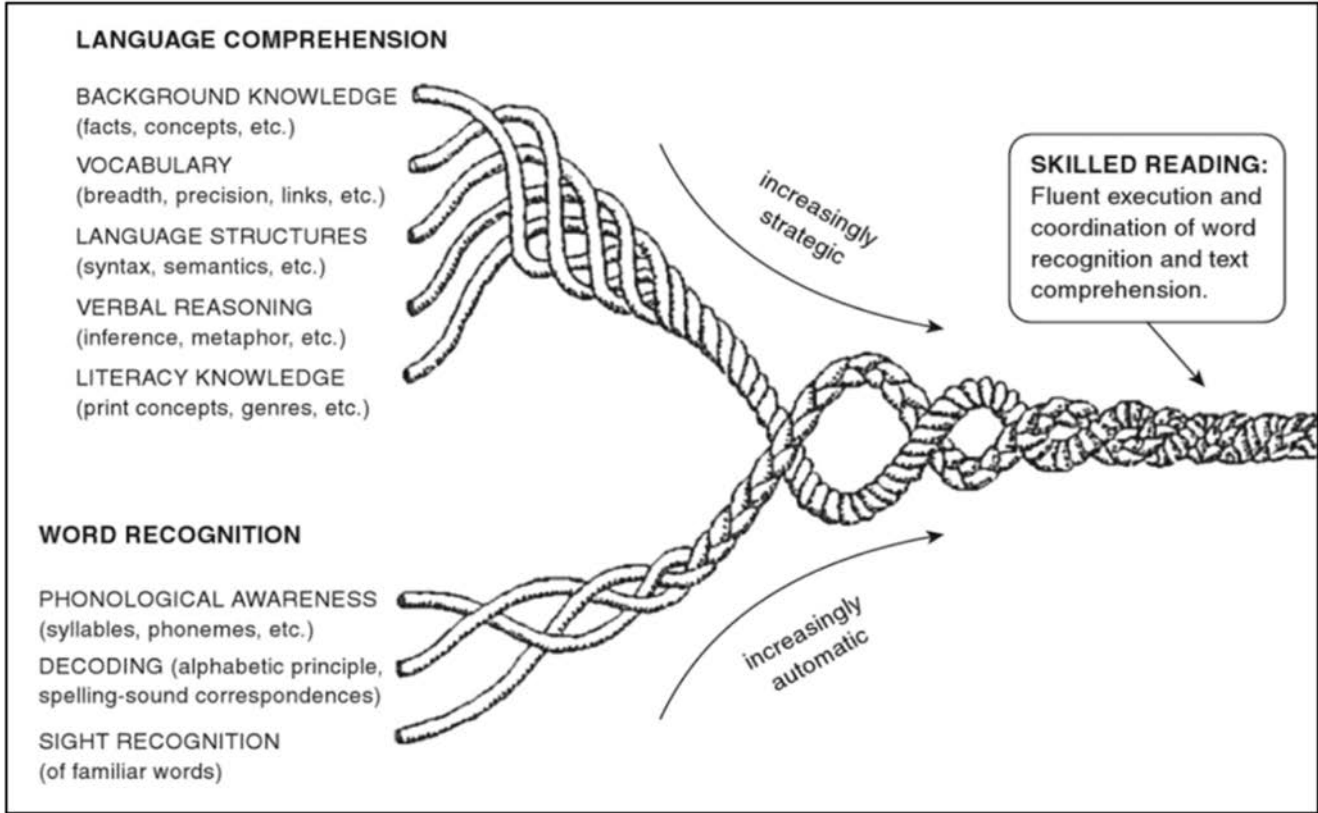
*(Idaho State Department of Education, 2022)*



# Skilled readers

What are some essential components of being a skilled reader?

# Scarborough's reading rope



Scarborough, H. (2001) Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory and practice. In S. Newman & D. Dickinson (Eds.), Handbook of Early Literacy Research. pp. 97-110. New York, Guilford Press. (used with permission of the author)



# Simple view of reading (SVR)

*Word Reading*  
Strong Poor

*Language Comprehension*  
Poor Strong

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adequate WR</li><li>• Adequate LC</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poor WR</li><li>• Adequate LC</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adequate WR</li><li>• Poor LC</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poor WR</li><li>• Poor LC</li></ul>

$$WR \times LC = C$$

WR: Word recognition  
(phonological awareness,  
decoding, and encoding skills)

LC: Language Comprehension  
(skills related to language  
comprehension)

$$1 \times 1 = 1$$

$$0 \times 1 = 0$$

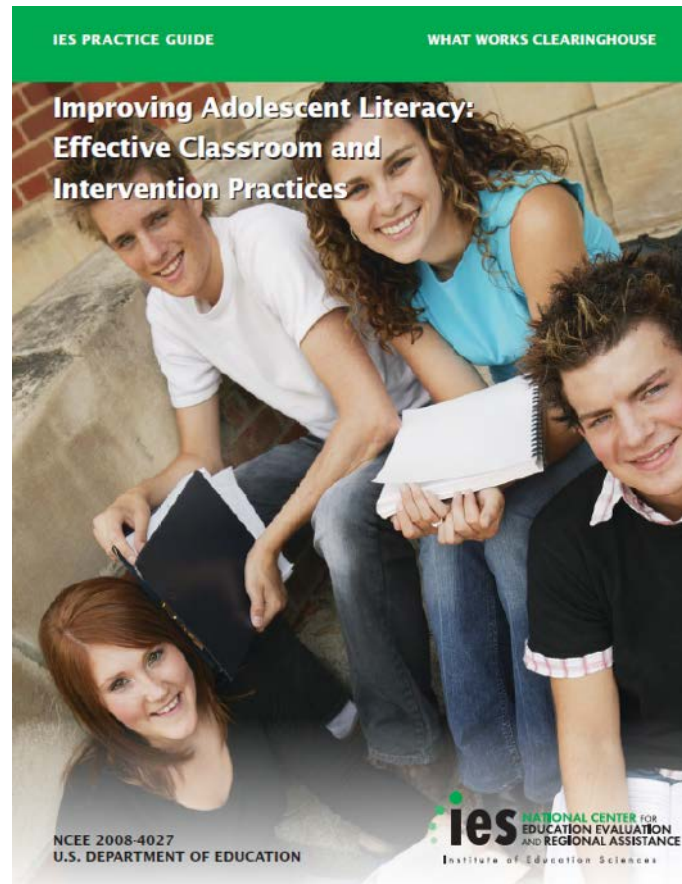
$$1 \times 0 = 0$$

(Gough & Tunmer, 1986)



# A collection of the best available evidence

## The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Practice Guide



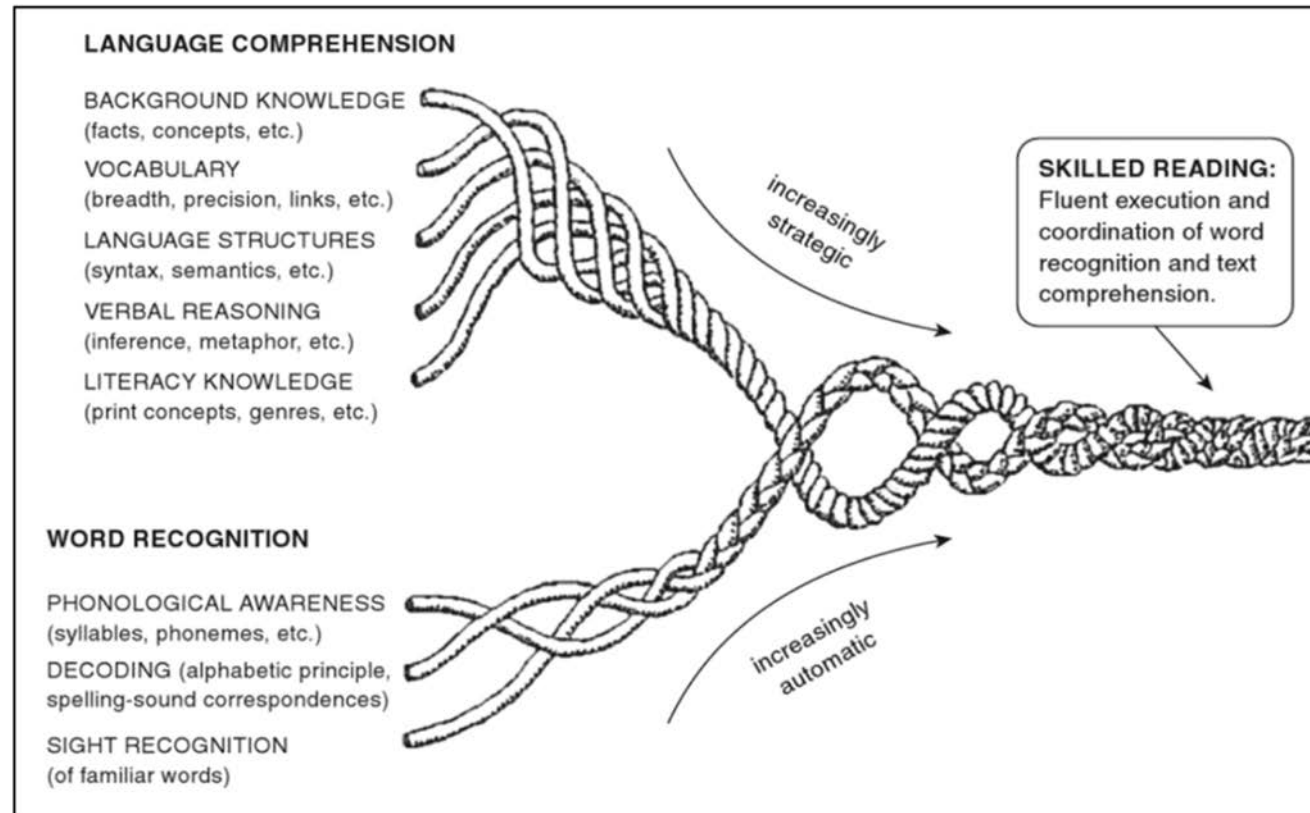
*(Kamil et al., 2008)*

# Five recommendations for improving literacy

1. Provide *explicit* vocabulary instruction
2. Provide *direct* and *explicit* comprehension instruction
3. Provide opportunities for *extended discussion* of text meaning and interpretation
4. Increase student *motivation and engagement* in literacy learning
5. Make available *intensive and individualized* interventions for struggling readers provided by trained specialists



# Recommendation 1. Explicit vocabulary instruction



Scarborough, H. (2001) Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory and practice. In S. Newman & D. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of Early Literacy Research*. pp. 97-110. New York, Guilford Press. (used with permission of the author)



# What's working in your classroom?

What effective strategies, resources, and  
activities do you use to teach vocabulary?

# Vocabulary: The key that unlocks the meaning of text



One of the most persistent findings in reading research is the extent to which students' vocabulary knowledge relates to their reading comprehension.”

*(Baumann et al., 2003)*





# Successful readers vs. unsuccessful readers

Successful Readers	Unsuccessful Readers
Are exposed to a breadth of vocabulary words in conversations and print at home and at school from a very early age.	Have limited exposure to new words. May not enjoy reading and therefore do not select reading as an independent activity.
Understand most words when they are reading (at least 90 percent) and can make sense of unknown words to build their vocabulary knowledge.	Read texts that are too difficult and, thus, are not able to comprehend what they read or to learn new words from reading.
Learn words incrementally through multiple exposures to new words.	Lack the variety of experiences and exposures necessary to gain deep understanding of new words.
Have content-specific prior knowledge that assists them in understanding how words are used in a particular context.	Often have limited content-specific prior knowledge that is not sufficient to support word learning.



# What is explicit vocabulary instruction?

A family of strategies that can be divided into two major approaches:

1. Direct instruction in word meaning
2. Instruction in strategies



# How to provide explicit vocabulary instruction

- Dedicate a portion of the regular classroom lesson to explicit **vocabulary instruction**.
- Use repeated exposure to new words in multiple **oral and written contexts** and allow **sufficient practice sessions**.
- Give sufficient opportunities to use new vocabulary in a **variety of contexts through activities** such as discussion, writing, and extended reading.
- Provide students with **strategies** to make them **independent** vocabulary learners.



# Disciplinary literacy

What effective strategies, resources, and activities do you use to teach vocabulary?

# Identification of word categories will help determine a method of instruction

Level 1 (Common)	Level 2 (Academic Words)	Level 3 (Content- or Domain-Specific)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basic</li><li>• Conversational</li></ul> <p><b>Examples:</b> Girl, smile, table, run</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High function</li><li>• High utility</li><li>• Frequently occurring in academic settings</li></ul> <p><b>Examples:</b> Fortunate, equate, provoke, sequence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highly specialized</li><li>• Not frequently encountered</li></ul> <p><b>Examples:</b> Amoebas, hypotenuse, Jacksonian, pi</p>



# Identification of words

Which words would be important to pre-teach?

# Core curriculum connection

## *Activity: Identifying Level 2 and 3 words*

1. With your partner, determine **who will read** the informational passage and who will read the literary passage.
2. **Individually read** your assigned passage. As you read, highlight **Level 2** words you'd teach for this passage in **yellow**. Highlight **Level 3** words you'd teach for this passage in **blue**.
3. With your partner, meet with another pair to **form a group of four**. **Discuss** what Level 2 and Level 3 words you highlighted and compare.
4. With your group, **place words in the t-chart** according to what highlighted words will need more time and attention and less time and attention.



# Do suggested vocabulary words in your core materials align to the suggested criteria?

## Words that

- >> Are central to understanding the text
- >> Are frequently used in the text
- >> Are likely to appear in other content areas
- >> Have multiple meanings
- >> Have affixes





# Different disciplines use different words

Discipline	Vocabulary Feature
<b>History</b>	Metaphorical terms with political points of view (War of Northern Aggression/War Between the States vs. Civil War, The Gilded Age, movements vs. uprisings)
<b>Science</b>	Greek and Latin roots (precise, stable, show relationships)
<b>Math</b>	Words that are precise but have different meanings than general use (factor, prime)
<b>ELA</b>	Words describing emotions, states of mind, and the senses (“the insane joy of the hunt,” “as I climbed the rock, my face contorted,” “shouting voluptuously senseless words”)



## Use of prefixes and suffixes

Of course, different disciplines use different words, but the frequency or value of prefixes, suffixes, and (especially) combining forms also differs by discipline.

*(Gutlohn & Bessellieu, 2014)*

# Most frequent prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Example	ELA	Math	Social Studies	Science
anti-	against	antiwar				
de-	not, opposite	deactivate				
dis-	not, opposite of	disagree				
en-, em-	cause to	encode, embrace				
fore-	before	forecast				
in-, im-	in, on	inhabit, imprint				
in-, im-, il-, ir-	not	injustice, impossible				
inter-	between	interact				
mid-	middle	midsize				
mis-	wrong	misfire				



# Most frequent prefixes (continued)

Prefix	Meaning	Example	ELA	Math	Social Studies	Science
non-	not	nonsensical				
over-	too much	overrun				
pre-	before	prehistoric				
re-	back, again	return, redesign				
semi-	half	semicircle				
sub-	under	submarine				
super-	above	superstar				
un-	not	unhappy				
under-	below	undersea				



# Most frequent suffixes

Suffix	Meaning	Example	ELA	Math	Social Studies	Science
-able, -ible	can be done	comfortable				
-al, -ial	having characteristic of	personal				
-ed	past tense verb	divided				
-en	made of	wooden				
-er	comparative	greater				
-er, -or	one who	worker, doctor				
-est	superlative	greatest				
-ful	full of	careful				
-ic	having characteristic of	linguistic				
-ing	present participle	figuring				
-ion, -tion, -ation, -ition	act, process	subtraction, radiation				



# Most frequent suffixes (continued)

	ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies
-al	•	•	•	•
-ar		•	•	
-ary	•			•
-ate	•	•	•	•
-ation	•	•	•	•
-ent		•	•	•
-ic	•	•	•	•
-ism			•	•
-ist				•
-ity	•	•	•	•
-ive	•	•	•	•
-ize	•		•	•
-ment	•	•	•	•



# 14 valuable morphemes: Root words

>> Cept

>> Duct

>> Fact

>> Fer

>> Graph

>> Mit

>> Ology

>> Plic

>> Pos

>> Scrib

>> Sist

>> Spect

>> Tend

>> Tent



# Explicit vocabulary instructional routine

<b>STEP 1</b>	<b>Introduce the Word</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write the word on the board</li><li>• Read the word.</li><li>• Students repeat.</li></ul>	<b>Example</b> <p>"This word is <i>courageous</i>. "What's the word?"</p>
<b>STEP 2</b>	<b>Present a Student-Friendly definition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell student the definition or</li><li>• have students read the definition with you after you have written it on the board.</li></ul>	<p>"<i>Courageous</i> means you are brave or not afraid"</p> <p>"When you or someone is brave and not afraid you are..."</p>
<b>STEP 3</b>	<b>Illustrate the Word with Examples</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concrete Examples</li><li>• Visual representations</li><li>• Verbal Examples</li></ul>	<p>"If I jumped out of an airplane with a ready parachute, I might be <i>courageous</i>."</p> <p>"You may be courageous to climb a large mountain."</p>
<b>STEP 4</b>	<b>Check Students' Understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check the students understanding engaging them with the word.</li><li>• Listen in closely to hear how students are understanding the word.</li></ul>	<p>- See <b>Engaging the Students with the Word.</b></p>





# Fast mapping



Even brief explanations of one or two sentences, when presented in the context of a supportive text, can be sufficient for [students] to make initial connections between novel words and their meanings.”

*(Biemiller & Boote, 2006)*



## Fast mapping (example)

The chemical formula behind water is surprisingly simple. First, it starts with two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. Then, these two parts are combined to form a molecule of water.

Oxygen is abundant on Earth and because of this, many scientists theorize that any source of hydrogen could have easily served as the origins of Earth's water.



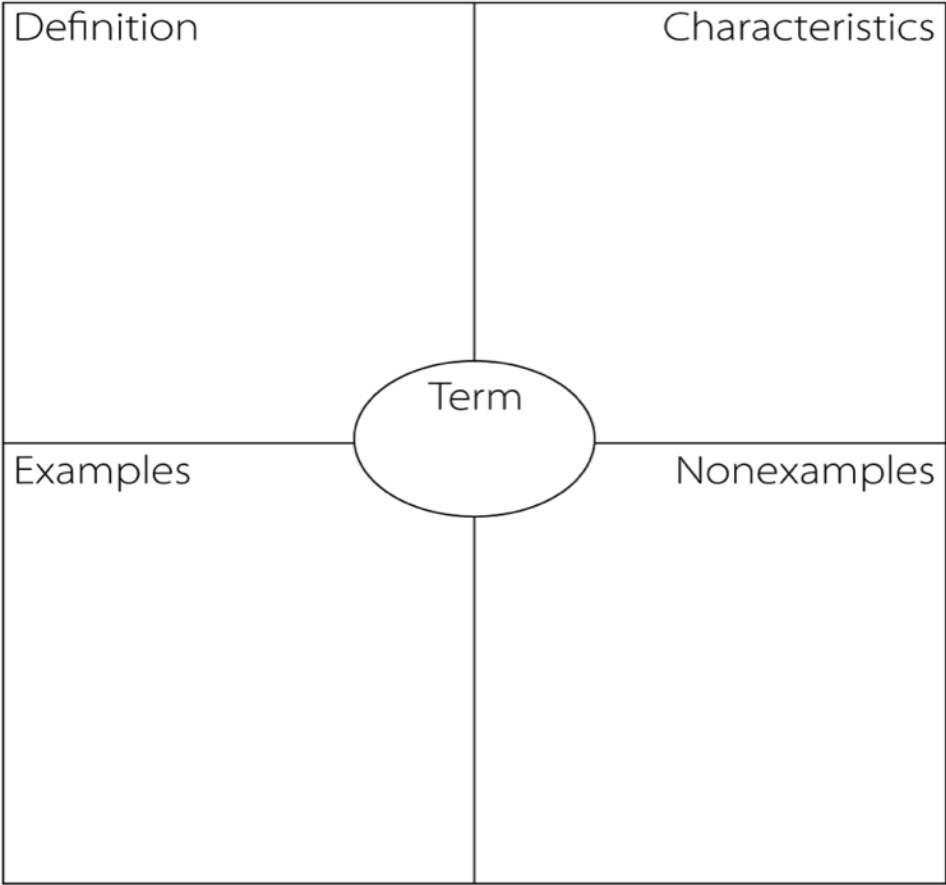
*(Fast Mapping: Carey's & Bartlett's Study and the Relation to Extended Mapping, 2014)*

# Your turn

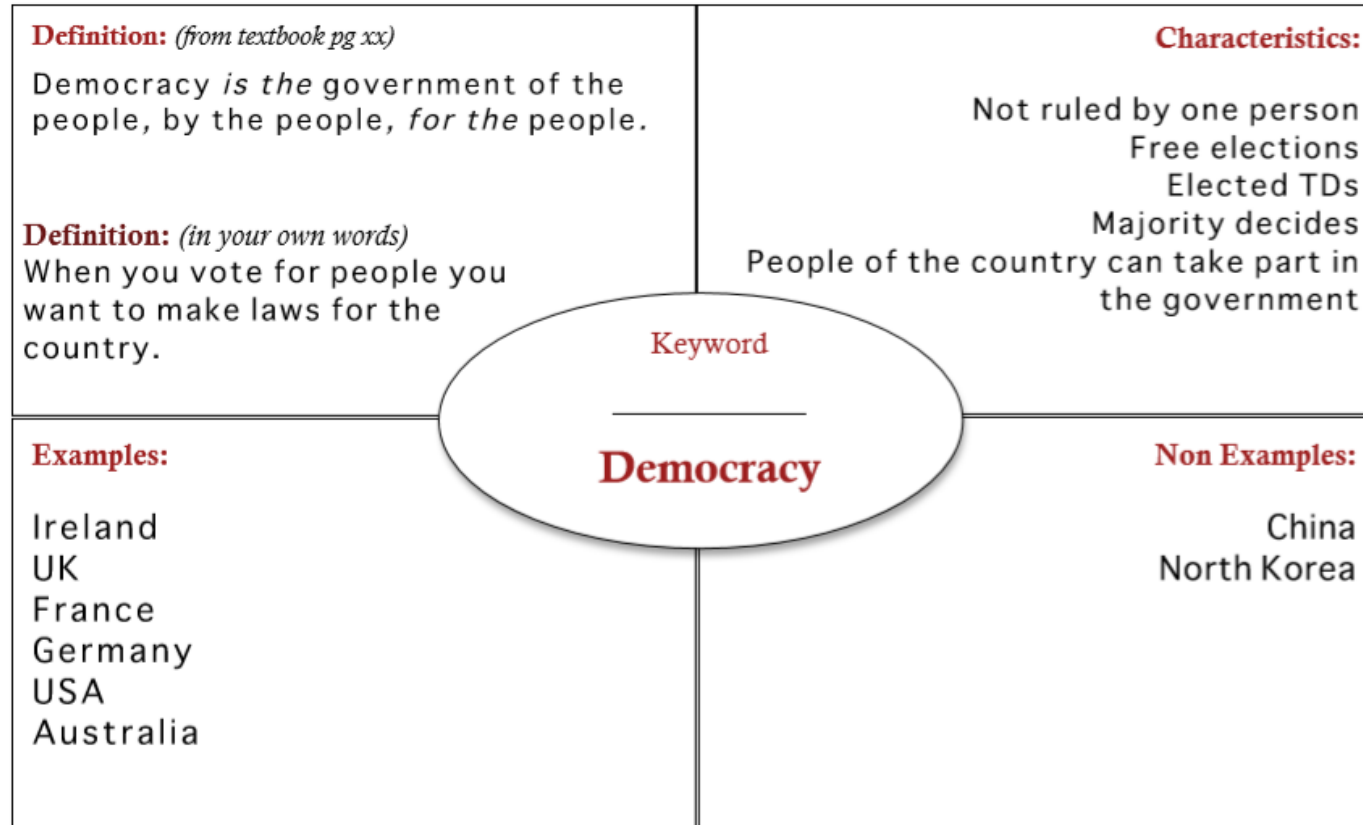
Discipline	Word
Social Studies	Ancestor
Science	Friction
Math	Inequality
ELA	Possess



# Instructional routine (example)

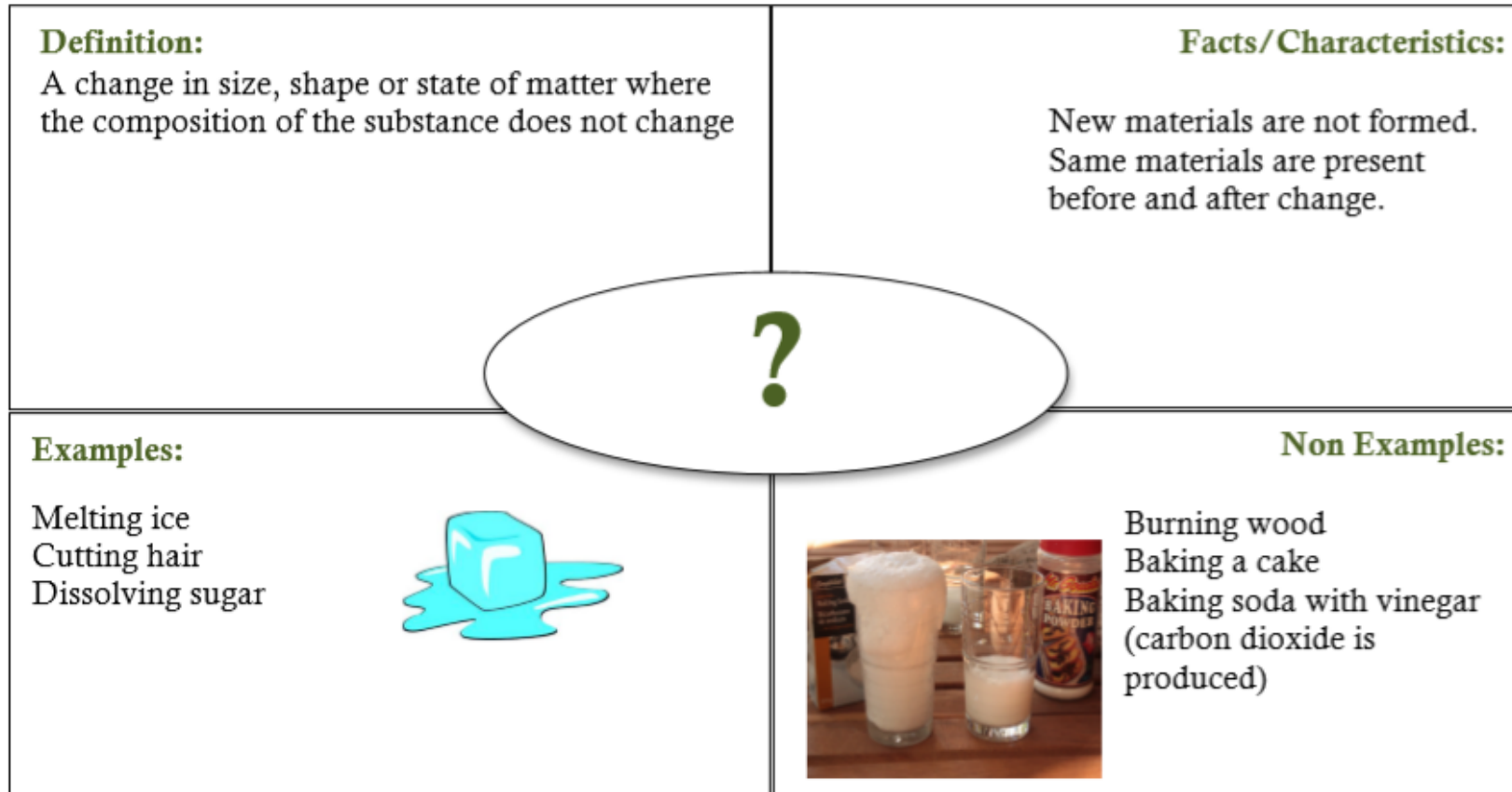


# Frayer Model



(Fast mapping: Carey's & Bartlett's study and the relation to extended mapping, 2014. Adapted from Frayer et al., 1969)

# Guess the word



# Student-friendly definitions of “memoir” (example)

<b>Student-Friendly Definition</b>	<b>Traditional Definition</b>
A writer retelling events that occurred during their life	A historical account or biography written from personal knowledge or special sources



# Memoir characteristics

- » Does not always tell about a person's entire life
- » Includes at least one life-changing event
- » Usually told in the first person
- » Nonfiction
- » A type of autobiography





# Examples and nonexamples

- » Provide multiple examples/synonyms
- » Use caution with nonexamples
- » Useful examples and nonexamples
  - » Closely related to topic and characteristics
  - » Concrete and personally or culturally relevant



# Memoir examples

- A short story about the day I broke my arm
- A diary kept by a child who grew up in a war zone
- A book by Michael Jordan about his experience playing baseball



# Memoir nonexamples

- A short story about turning into a superhero
- A fictional diary of a teenager who is having trouble at school
- A book an author writes about Michael Jordan's time playing baseball



# Visual and kinesthetic representations

## Demonstrations

>> “Maneuver”

## Pictures of examples and nonexamples

>> “Boat”



# Reflections: Think, write, and share

- >> What information was new? What was a good reminder?
- >> What implications does this information have for your classroom?
- >> What is one thing you would like to try with your students?
- >> How might you use this information when planning a lesson?



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