

Vocabulary Cartoons Instructions



Introduction

Thanks for volunteering to try the Vocabulary Cartoon approach to teaching vocabulary. This should not be the only approach – or the only words- your students learn this year, but I have found this method to be highly successful and motivational to both my high school and middle school students. Student retention and actual use of the words was phenomenal.

Vocabulary Cartoons will provide one word a day for your students to learn. Because there are only three of these Vocabulary Cartoon books, I have divided them in half so that grades 5 & 6 will use Vocabulary Cartoons (red book); grades 7 & 8 will use Vocabulary Cartoons (blue border) and grades 9 & 10 will use the Vocabulary Cartoons II book (white title).

You will, of course, continue to work with students on vocabulary in context and academic vocabulary as it relates to literature and writing.

Background

For many years, I worked with my students on vocabulary in context as we read literature or social studies texts. We looked at surrounding sentences to get clues about the meaning of words. Sometimes this worked and sometimes the context was not strong enough to figure out the definition. I created and used word lists to coincide with our novels or selections from the anthology. Students were instructed to use the dictionary to write definitions and then a sentence. While most complied, they did not necessarily understand the meaning and/or could not use the word appropriately in a sentence or in speaking. When we finished with one novel or story, we would move on to the next one, with a new list of words carefully selected from the text. They learned the words on an academic level, perhaps memorized them for a vocabulary quiz, but I never really followed up on their use.

In the past I have also used vocabulary workbooks. Students were traditionally introduced to 20 words a week every Monday. They memorized their meanings, completed numerous fill-in-the blank and matching exercises (frequently completed or copied from friends during lunch time), and then were tested on the definitions and appropriate sentences at the end of the week. The next Monday, we would move on to 20 more words, rarely looking back to the ones we had just learned. There was no reinforcement learning; speed and moving through the book was paramount. When end-of-semester exams came along, students took two nights to re-memorize the words with their definitions – took the exam - and then promptly forget the words.

An Idea

I struggled for years trying to come up with a more effective way of teaching vocabulary. As you know, knowledge of vocabulary is a key component to successful reading comprehension, and the ability to use a variety of rich words in writing bolsters style as well as message. Experimenting with a number of approaches, including visual representation, and studying the latest research on vocabulary acquisition, I decided to try a visual vocabulary approach coupled with consistent use of the targeted words throughout the year.

The Plan

Targeted Words + Visual/Memorable Representation + Model Sentences + Continual Use and Practice = Learning, retention and use of words

Each grade level from 6 – 10 will focus on different words. (They are listed below.) The book you will be using is set up in the following manner:

- ❖ There are ten words per chapter.
- ❖ Each page focuses on one word, providing pronunciation guide, definition, a rhyming link word, a silly picture to represent the meaning, a sentence incorporating the definition and link word, and three sentences illustrating how the word is used.
- ❖ Each chapter has a quick 20 question quiz at the end.

1. Students will learn one new word a day. The words your grade level will learn are as follows:

Grade 5 *Vocabulary Cartoons (Elementary) Kids Learn a Word a Minute and Never Forget It*

Words: abduct – intuition
Review 1 – 10, pp.13-122

Grade 6 *Vocabulary Cartoons (Elementary) Kids Learn a Minute and Never Forget It*

Words: rage- unruly
Review 11-20, pp.123-243

Grade 7 *Vocabulary Cartoons
Learn Hundreds of SAT Words Fast with Easy Memory Techniques*

Words: chattel - ubiquitous
Review 1 – 14, pp. 15 - 168

Grade 8	<i>Vocabulary Cartoons</i> <i>Learn Hundreds of SAT Words Fast with Easy Memory Techniques</i> Words: insouciant - dormant Review 15 - 29, pp. 169 -333
Grade 9	<i>Vocabulary Cartoons II</i> <i>Learn Hundreds of SAT Words Fast with Easy Memory Techniques</i> Words: abash - gregarious Review 1 - 14, pp. 1 - 168
Grade 10	<i>Vocabulary Cartoons II</i> Learn Hundreds of SAT Words Fast with Easy Memory Techniques Words: gullible - zenith Review 15 - 29, pp. 169 - 333

How to Proceed

1. Set up a daily, or nearly daily, routine. (I was not always able to address one word a day, so sometimes I did two words at a time. You do not have 180 words, so if you miss a few days because of assemblies, WASL, etc., that is not a problem.)
2. When you begin each chapter, decide if you want to introduce five or ten words at a time. Write them on the board. Ask students to copy them in their notebooks in the vocabulary section. They should leave a space in between each word.
3. When students have finished writing the words, ask them if anyone already knows the meaning of any of the words. If they do, ask them to explain what it means. All students in the class can write down this definition in their notebooks (make sure you agree with the definition).

In addition to any words students already know, you may want to dissect words with common roots or affixes with them. For example, if you have the word *euphonious*, you may ask if students know any other words that have the root phon or phono in it. Words that might come up are phonograph, telephone, ear-phone, phonics, etc. Discuss that this word probably has something to do with sound or hearing. This allows you to make some predictions about the word.

This would end your introduction to the words on this day.

4. After you have completed this, you will put targeted words you went over on your word wall. They will stay there all year so that you and students can refer to them and be reminded of them on a daily basis.

5. You would then introduce one word each day, even if you have already defined it. Begin with the page of your first targeted word; create a transparency or place it under the document camera. I always had the page projected as students walked into the classroom. They were responsible for immediately copying the word, definition, and link word. Many would create a quick facsimile of the picture. And some copied down the sample sentences. You can decide how much you want them to write. While they did this, I took attendance.
6. Students should finish writing in two or three minutes. At this point, pronounce the word correctly for them. Then have all students repeat the correct pronunciation of the word a couple of times.
7. Following this, I read and explained the definition and introduced the link word, making sure that everyone understood the humor of the link, the picture and the silly sentence.
8. Students were asked if they could describe anyone or anything that fit this description. For example, if the word is gloat (to brag greatly), a student might offer that she is no longer best friends with her neighbor Jennifer because she gloats about her straight A's. Another might offer that he gloats when he beats his father at chess.
9. From here, have students read the exemplary sentences. Discuss them as a group.
10. Ask students to write one sentence each night for the word that was introduced. You can assess their homework in a variety of ways: collect the sentences and read them and give feedback; have students put their sentences on their desks and go around and read each, checking that they completed the work and helping anyone who did not understand. You could ask one person a day to read his/her sentence aloud for the group, etc.
11. Continue steps 5-9 each day until you complete your 10 words.
12. When each block of 10 words is completed, students will complete some sort of activity with the 10 words as a review. It might be writing a story using the words, or it could be a game of Pictionary using the words.
13. When you are satisfied that students know the words, administer the 20 question quiz. Most students will get these all correct.

Continual Use and Practice

It is essential that vocabulary words are constantly in front of students and that students play with and use the words. Only then will students retain their meaning and be able to use them in speech and writing. Following are some ways to keep the cumulative words in the forefront:

- ❖ Refer to the word wall daily. After completing the routine page from the book, look at the word wall and randomly select a word and say, "Okay, Julie. Can you

remember what the word chattel means? Steven, please give us a sentence.” Build in support from teacher or partners so that students are willing to risk responses.

- ❖ Some days I skip the page from the book and just review the words. This is helpful, especially as you begin to accumulate words. When you have 30 words on the wall, for example, you want to make sure that students remember and can use word number 11. Very quickly “throw out” words and ask for definitions and sentences. This should take three-five minutes.
- ❖ Play games with the words. Ask students to stand up and form a circle around the room or two lines facing each other. You should have a soft ball or small stuffed animal. One student holds the ball and begins. He selects a word from the word wall and says that word out loud. He then tosses the ball or stuffed animal to a student to give the definition or sentence. That student then selects a word and throws the ball to another student. Three to four minutes makes for a nice review.
- ❖ Some days, I will ask students to use five of the words in the word wall in a story. They work in teams or partnerships. This is a quick 10 minute activity in which they collaborate on a very short story. You could give each group a picture and ask them to create a story based on the picture, using the words, or leave it up to their imaginations. Groups would quickly share out their stories.
- ❖ Ask students to write down when they see or hear their vocabulary words being used. If Mom used the word pique while she was driving carpool for your soccer team, you would write

Pique-to arouse curiosity

While driving to soccer practice last night, my mom said to my friend John, “John, you piqued my interest when you talked about a new Mexican restaurant. I love Mexican food. Where is it located?”

Students might also see words as they are reading a text or hear them on TV. I gave extra credit if students wrote the examples down, shared them with the class and then stapled them onto the Vocabulary Example Wall.

- ❖ Students also received extra credit when they correctly used the vocabulary words in their writing.

Please let me know if I can clarify any of this for you or if you would like to meet to discuss strategies. As you go along, I’d love to get feedback from you about your successes and challenges.

Thanks!

Loretta Comfort
Curriculum Specialist for Literacy
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