



Helping English Language Learners in Grades 4-12 Meet Standards for Reading: Enhancing Background and Acquiring Vocabulary

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Participant Activity Handout



Excerpt from *The Voice That Challenged a Nation:*

Marian Anderson and the Struggle for Equal Rights by Russell Freedman ¹

[1] Despite cold and threatening weather, the crowd began to assemble long before the concert was to begin. People arrived singly and in pairs and in large animated groups. Soon the streets leading to the Mall in Washington, D.C., were jammed with thousands of people heading for the Lincoln Memorial.

[2] The earliest arrivals found places as close as possible to the steps of the great marble monument. As the crowd grew, it spread back along the Mall, stretching around both sides of the long reflecting pool and extending beyond to the base of the Washington Monument, three-quarters of a mile away. Baby carriages were parked among the trees. Folks cradled sleeping infants in their arms and held youngsters by the hand or propped up on their shoulders. Uniformed Boy Scouts moved through the festive holiday throng handing out programs.

[3] Anticipating a huge turnout, the National Park Service had enlisted the help of some five hundred Washington police officers. By five o'clock that afternoon, when the concert was scheduled to start, an estimated 75,000 people had gathered on the Mall. They waited patiently under overcast skies, bundled up against the brisk wind that whipped in from the Potomac

¹ Excerpt from *The voice that challenged a nation: Marian Anderson and the struggle for equal rights* by Russell Freedman (pp. 1–3). Copyright © 2004 by Russell Freedman. Reprinted by permission of Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

River. They had come on this chilly Easter Sunday to hear one of the great voices of the time and to demonstrate their support for racial justice in the nation's capital.

[4] Marian Anderson had been applauded by many of the crowned heads of Europe. She had been welcomed at the White House, where she sang for the president and first lady, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. She had performed before appreciative audiences in concert halls across the United States. But because she was an African American, she had been denied the right to sing at Constitution Hall, Washington's largest and finest auditorium. The Daughters of the American Revolution, the patriotic organization that owned Constitution Hall, had ruled several years earlier that black artists would not be permitted to appear there.

[5] News of the DAR's ban had caused an angry controversy and set the stage for a historic event in the struggle for civil rights. Working behind the scenes, a group of influential political figures had found an appropriate concert space for Anderson. Barred from Constitution Hall, she would give a free open-air concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

[6] Shortly before the concert got under way, the skies above Washington began to clear. Clouds, which had shadowed the monument, skittered away to the north, and the late afternoon sun broke through to bathe the reflecting pool and shine on the gaily dressed Easter crowd. Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes appeared on the speaker's platform. He introduced Miss Anderson, and she stepped forward to the bank of microphones.

[7] The massive figure of Abraham Lincoln gazed down at her as she looked out at the expectant throng. Silencing the ovation with a slight wave of her hand, she paused. A profound hush settled over the crowd. For that moment, Marian Anderson seemed vulnerable and alone. Then she closed her eyes, lifted her head, clasped her hands before her, and began to sing.

Activity 1: Enhancing Background Knowledge

Directions: Refer to *The Voice That Challenged a Nation* excerpt. Describe any additional background knowledge that is important for understanding this passage. Identify methods for teaching the needed background.

Topics	Teaching Methods

Information for Selecting Vocabulary

Frequency

Resources to identify words for vocabulary instruction:

First 4,000 Words Project list

http://www.sewardreadingresources.com/img/fourkw/4KW_Teaching_List.pdf

Academic Word List Highlighter

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/alzsh3/acvocab/awllhighlighter.htm>

Word Sift

<http://wordsift.com/>

Conceptual Complexity

Imageability

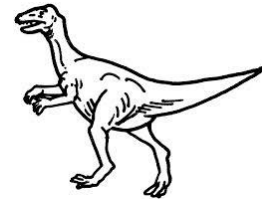
A word is easily *imageable* if little effort is required to form an image of it in your mind.

If you wanted to draw a picture of the word, how much context would be required? A word that could be drawn without context is easily imageable.

Easily imageable words: dinosaur, pencil, rain

Somewhat imageable words: prevent, abandoned

Not imageable words: spirit, promise, merely



Concreteness

A word is *concrete* (tangible) if its referent can be easily perceived through the senses.

How easily can you feel, smell, see, hear, or taste a referent of the word?

Very concrete words: eggs, throne, pencil, run

Somewhat abstract words: expensive, peered

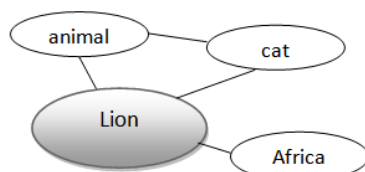
Very abstract words: era, indeed



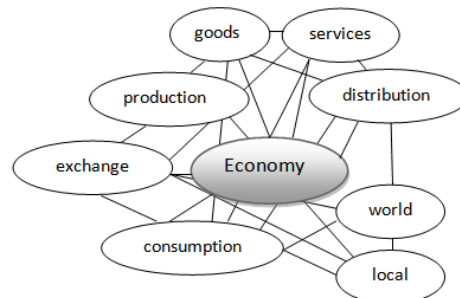
Relatedness

The degree to which understanding the word requires an understanding of related concepts is *relatedness*.

Words that have dense networks of other related concepts have high relatedness:



Low relatedness



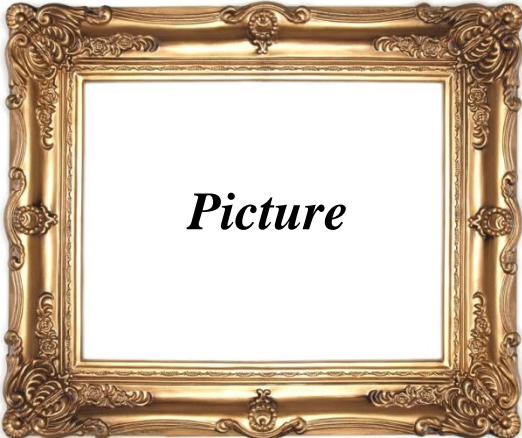
High relatedness

Creating Word Cards for Extended Vocabulary Instruction

Below is a template to create word cards for extended vocabulary instruction. The picture is a crucial element of the word card. When selecting pictures:

- Choose images that are appropriate to the grade level of the students.
- Choose images that show people from diverse backgrounds.
- Use context to support the word's meaning.
- Select a picture that exemplifies the use of the word in the text. For example, for the word *face* in the excerpt, the picture would show a human face, because that is what the word refers to in the text.

Consult the beginner's dictionary at www.wordsmyth.net for student friendly definitions. Use a Spanish dictionary and check with a native Spanish speaker to ensure that Spanish words and definitions have been translated accurately.

Word (English)	Word (Spanish)
 <p><i>Picture</i></p>	
Sentence frame	
Teacher says	
Picture. Look at this illustration, or picture. [<i>Explanation of or question about how picture illustrates the word</i>].	
Explanation. Let's talk about [<i>word</i>]. [<i>word</i>] means [<i>English definition</i>].	
[<i>word</i>] in Spanish is [<i>palabra</i>].	
Let's spell [<i>word</i>]. What word have we spelled?	
Partner talk. Talk about [<i>something that relates the word to students' experiences</i>].	
Text connection. In the story, [<i>quote with word used in the text; explanation of actual use in the text</i>].	

Creating Word Cards (cont.) ...

Use the template below to create a word cards for words that need extended instruction:

- Use the descriptions on page 8 of this handout for additional guidance. Use online resources for pictures, definitions, and translations.

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<p><i>Teacher says</i></p> <p>Picture. Look at this illustration, or picture. _____ _____.</p> <p>Explanation. Let's talk about _____. _____ means _____ _____.</p> <p>_____ in Spanish is _____.</p> <p>Let's spell _____. What word have we spelled?</p> <p>Partner talk. Talk about _____ _____.</p> <p>Text connection. _____</p> <p>In this story, the word _____ is used to mean _____ _____.</p>

Activity 2: Vocabulary Instruction

Directions: Read the excerpt below from *The Voice That Challenged a Nation*.

1. Marian Anderson had been applauded by many of the crowned heads of Europe. She had been welcomed at the White House, where she sang for the president and first lady, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. She had performed before appreciative audiences in concert halls across the United States. But because she was an African American, she had been denied the right to sing at Constitution Hall, Washington’s largest and finest auditorium. The Daughters of the American Revolution, the patriotic organization that owned Constitution Hall, had ruled several years earlier that black artists would not be permitted to appear there.

News of the DAR’s ban had caused an angry controversy and set the stage for a historic event in the struggle for civil rights. Working behind the scenes, a group of influential political figures had found an appropriate concert space for Anderson. Barred from Constitution Hall, she would give a free open-air concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

2. Use these resources to identify words for vocabulary instruction:

- Academic Word List Highlighter (<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/alzsh3/acvocab/awhighlighter.htm>)
- Word Sift (<http://www.wordsift.com/>)

3. Complete the chart.

- Identify words for teacher-directed extended vocabulary instruction and teacher-directed embedded vocabulary instruction.
- Identify some words that students might learn using student-directed vocabulary learning (for example, cognates and context clues).
- Identify strategies for teaching these words.

4. Be prepared to explain your rationale for word selection and strategies.

Teacher Directed		Student Directed
Using Extended Instruction	Using Embedded Instruction	Word Learning Strategies
Word:	Word:	Words:
Strategy(ies)	Strategies	Strategies



Our EXPERTISE

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. Improve school readiness through curriculum and teacher training using **COLLTS** (Cultivating Oral Language and Literacy Talent in Students), a research-based program developed by AIR to prepare prekindergarten and kindergarten dual-language learners for mastering kindergarten English language arts standards.

K-12 CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION. Assist districts and schools as they implement curriculum and instruction to meet their states' challenging academic standards using AIR's Attaining Core Content for ELLs (**ACCELL**), a research-based framework for scaffolding core content for English language learners (ELLs).

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL SUPPORT. Review current programs and policies to develop resources and structures to improve ELL outcomes; for example, identify students who are struggling as well as those who are excelling; provide guidance on alternative assessments and accommodations to capture ELL learning; and ensure that teacher evaluation systems support effective teaching of English language learners.



The Center for English Language Learners at AIR

is committed to reducing the achievement gap and improving outcomes for English language learners by conducting rigorous research and connecting research to policy and practice.

Diane August, Ph.D., leads the center. She is supported by a skilled AIR team with experience working with numerous schools, districts, universities, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies to help English language learners achieve success.

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Research References

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