



## Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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### Strategies for Dealing with New Words

1. When you encounter a new word in your reading, write it down in a vocabulary journal, along with its definition. Review your list from time to time to build your vocabulary.
2. Notice the relationship between words and phrases in a passage. Be alert to clues to meaning provided by the context in which unfamiliar words appear.
3. Notice the use of key word such as *and*, *also*, and *likewise* that signal comparisons.
4. Notice the use of key words such as *however*, *in contrast*, *rather*, and *on the other hand* that signal contrasts.
5. Be alert to restatements, appositions, synonyms, and antonyms.
6. Use your knowledge of word parts, including prefixes, suffixes, base words, and roots, to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words containing these parts.

### One Approach to Vocabulary List-Group-Label

The List-Group-Label approach to vocabulary, also called Semantic Mapping, is especially effective in social studies and science. It is based on the use of categorization as a way to teach students to organize their verbal concepts. It is most appropriate when many of the concepts are familiar so prior knowledge can be activated and connections made to the topic.

The lesson begins with the teacher providing students with a stimulus drawn from their experiences or from materials they are studying. Next, students develop a list of words they associate with the topic, generating a list of 25 – 30 words. The students then construct smaller lists of words from the large list and provide a label for each grouping. Approximately three to five words are placed in the smaller groups, and students then explain why the pave groups words in a particular manner.

An effective pre-reading strategy, this lesson activates students' content knowledge, thereby enhancing comprehension.

Prompt/Stimulus Topic: geometry

square	cubic centimeters	math
volume	area	cube
pyramid	cone	sphere
symmetry	protractor	ruler
square inches	equilateral	base
rectangle	triangular prism	side
cylinder	prism	face
edge	corner	circle
congruence	surface	compass

triangle

These words could be grouped in many ways; one way is as follows.

- Protractor, ruler, compass = measurement tools
- Sphere, cone, circle, cylinder = curved surfaces
- Square inches, volume, area, cubic centimeters = forms of measurement
- Cylinder, prism, cube, pyramid, square = things that have faces
- Prism, cone, cube, triangular prism = space figures
- Square, sphere, corner, volume, circle = word with six letters
- Side, symmetry, square, square inches, surface = word that begin with s

Most of the words are grouped according to meaningful semantic relationships. The last two groups are not. Although this is not an acceptable outcome for this lesson, it may serve as a mnemonic device for some student as they deal with text material. The purpose of this lesson is to stimulate meaningful word associations, thereby activating students' prior knowledge.

This lesson may also be used as a follow-up activity in the post-reading stage of a content area lesson. The steps are identical, but the purpose is different. Here, it would be used for review and reinforcement of text concepts; that is, students are encouraged to use the content knowledge they have gained from the text in addition to related prior knowledge to form groups and label them. This type of lesson also helps teachers ascertain whether students have learned the important text concepts.

From Prereading Activities for Content Area  
Reading and Learning