



To: Parents and teachers of Grade 4 - 6 learners

Topic: Vocabulary

**Message Objectives:**

- Provide learners with opportunities to learn words independently.
- Teach learners the meanings of specific words.
- Nurture a love and appreciation of words and their use.

**Message:** Vocabulary is the foundation of language. We use vocabulary to express our thoughts and ideas, share information, understand others and grow personal relationships. The scientific research on vocabulary instruction reveals that most vocabulary is learned indirectly, and some vocabulary must be taught directly.

**Indirect vocabulary learning**

Children learn the meanings of most words indirectly, through everyday experiences with oral and written language. Children learn word meanings indirectly in three ways:

- **They engage daily in oral language:** Children learn word meanings through conversations with other people, especially adults. As they engage in these conversations, children often hear adults repeat words several times. They also may hear adults use new and interesting words. The more oral language experiences children have, the more word meanings they learn.
- **They listen to adults read to them:** Children learn word meanings from listening to adults read to them. Reading aloud is particularly helpful when the reader pauses during reading to define an unfamiliar word and, after reading, engages the child in a conversation about the book. Conversations about books help children to learn new words and concepts and to relate them to their prior knowledge and experience.
- **They read extensively on their own:** Children learn many new words by reading extensively on their own. The more children read on their own, the more words they encounter and the more word meanings they learn.

**Direct vocabulary learning**

Children learn difficult words that represent complex concepts that are not part of their everyday experiences. They also learn word-learning strategies such as:

- **Teaching specific words before reading helps both vocabulary learning and reading comprehension:** Teaching important vocabulary before reading can help students both learn new words and comprehend the text.
- **Repeated exposure to vocabulary in many contexts aids word learning:** The more children see, hear, and work with specific words, the better they seem to learn them. When teachers provide extended instruction that promotes active engagement, they give students repeated exposure to new words.

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Reference:

[PSRIP IP — National Education Collaboration Trust \(nect.org.za\)](https://textinspector.com/vocabulary-in-language-learning/)  
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