



Vocabulary in Context / Vocabulario contextualizado (TK – 3rd Grade)

- *Preschool Foundations Language #2.1: Understand and use an increasing variety and specificity of accepted words for objects, actions and attributes encountered in both real and symbolic contexts*
- *Preschool Foundations Language #3.3: Begin to recognize that letters have sounds*
- *RL #4: Interpret words and phrases from text*
- *RI #4: Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text*
- *RF #1: Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of text*
- *RL #5: Recognize common types of texts, and major differences between fact and fiction*
- *RL #10: Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding*
- *RF #1: Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of text*
- *RF #2: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words both in isolation and in text*
- *RF #4: Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables and sounds (phonemes)*
- *L #1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage*
- *L #4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words and phrases based on grade-level content and reading*
- *L #5: Explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings*

Summary

The number of words a child knows is directly related to their ability to talk about and describe their world and their thoughts. While vocabulary can be taught, most often young children develop vocabulary through hearing it in use and inferring and deducing the meaning. Vocabulary OUT of context is much more difficult for them to learn. The sheer number of words in a child's vocabulary is a predictor of reading comprehension and academic success. Equally important, is for children to develop the skill of inferring meaning from context.

Throughout their school career, students will encounter thousands of new and unfamiliar words in literature, textbooks, lectures, and other media. One of the major differences between proficient readers and emergent readers is their ability to use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words. Therefore as teachers, it is critical that we model and provide multiple opportunities for students to examine text and utilize context to make thoughtful predictions of word meanings.

“Vocabulary in Context” is a strategy for teaching vocabulary as well as developing inference skills. The Vocabulary in Context strategy can also be used as a vehicle to teach word study skills, synonyms, antonyms, word formations, analysis of roots and cognates, and multiple meanings.

Implementation

The teacher preselects a word she will be teaching that day and creates a sentence or lifts a sentence from a book that uses the vocabulary word and writes the sentence on a sentence strip. The next day, the teacher introduces the new word and asks students to repeat the word several times.

Teacher: "Friends, our vocabulary word for today is community. Say it with me—community. Say it to the ceiling. Say it to the floor. Whisper it to your neighbor."

The teacher then surveys the class asking how many students have heard/never heard the word before and writes that number on the vocabulary in context chart. This serves as both a quick assessment for the teacher to determine how many students have had previous exposure to the word, and also helps students activate their prior knowledge as they reflect on whether they know this word, have heard it or seen it before.

In TK-1st grade classrooms, the teacher then draws horizontal lines on the chart paper to indicate the number of letters used to write the word (e.g. 9 lines _____ would be drawn for the word *community*). She then elicits the help of students to write each letter on the chart. This is done in an interactive manner, sounding out each letter of the word and having students write the corresponding letter.

The teacher then shares the sentence with the students modeling how to read with fluency. She underlines the vocabulary word in the sentence and asks students to read the sentence with her several times. Guiding students to use the context clues, the teacher asks students to work with a partner or in a small group to predict the meaning of the word.

The teacher then asks students to share their predictions and reasoning. Asking students how they came up with their predictions is important for metacognition. It helps students to become aware of their thought process. In orally sharing the prediction with the class, it serves as a model for other students as to one approach to inferring meaning. In addition, having students share their reasoning provides the teacher with insight as to what connections students are making. During their share out, the teacher will probe them to share which words in the sentence helped them make their prediction. Those words are then highlighted as important clue words.

The teacher indicates to students that they will uncover the final meaning of the word throughout the day. She shares a short (2-3 word) phrase or synonym with the students and provides a quick gesture or movement students will use every time they hear the word. Throughout the day, the teacher uses the vocabulary word as a signal for transitions and is mindful of sharing the final meaning of the word with students through a specific lesson.

Later, after the teacher has taught a lesson that explored the content and used the word of the day multiple times in various contexts, the teacher returns to the Vocabulary in Context chart. She stops and asks students to partner up and share the final meaning with one another. Depending on time and the needs of the students, the teacher can choose to stop the lesson and add the final meaning to the Vocabulary in Context chart or add it on the following day.

The next day, the teacher revisits the sentence and discusses context clues, adds a sketch to the final meaning, and if possible writes the word in the students' primary language (e.g.

community=comunidad); or, if the class instruction is in Spanish, the English word would be written at this time. The teacher will point out cognates if appropriate. The addition of the Spanish or English word should be in a different color.

In addition, the teacher would take this time to focus on any word study skills such as identifying its part of speech, prefixes, suffixes, root words, adding synonyms or antonyms of the word as well as any important word formations.

On the third day the students would work collaboratively in teams to create their own sentences using the vocabulary word. The teacher should provide sentence frames and model how to use them. However, students should always have the option to create their own sentence.

After students have shared their sentences, the teacher introduces a new vocabulary word and begins this process again.

Fire fighters help keep our **community** safe by putting out fires.

New Word	Final Meaning	Language Arts Extensions
Community A-4 NH-25 /k/ noun	a group of people who live in the same area comunidad	plural: communities synonyms: neighborhood, society
Compare A-2 NH-25 /k/ verb	to look at 2 or more things and see what is similar and different Comparar	CO- /k/ cold computer cone coffee compared to compared with comparing

When building a home, construction workers need to **compare** the different types of wood to determine which one is the strongest.

Los bomberos ayudan a mantener nuestra

Notes on Vocabulary in Context

Palabra nueva	Significado	Extensión de lenguaje
E-8 escuchado NE- No he escuchado	bosquejo, inglés	lenguaje
E-7 NE-21	un grupo de personas que viven en la misma area 	plural: comunidades sinónimo: sociedad vecindario
comunidad /k/ sustantivo	community	
E-5 NE-22	observar 2 o mas cosas para ver si son iguales o diferentes 	CO- /k/ codo computadora con coñac comparar con comparando

Photos of Vocabulary in Context

Kindergarten - Third Grade

Al construir una casa, los trabajadores de construcción tienen que **comparar** los diferentes tipos de madera para determinar cuál es el más fuerte.

Note the Spanish word written under the final meaning, to demonstrate cognates and aide comprehension.



Vocabulary in Context / Vocabulario contextualizado (4th – 6th Grade)

- *RL #4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text*
- *RL #5: Recognize common types of texts, and major differences between fact and fiction*
- *RL #10: read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry*
- *RF #3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words*
- *RF #4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension*
- *L #1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage*
- *L#3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening*
- *L #4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.*
- *L #5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings*

Alignment & Articulation

PreK – 3 rd	4 th – 6 th
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher selects a word that s/he will teach that day and provides the word in a written sentence which offers clues to the meaning. • Teacher guides students to use context clues to predict the meaning of the word. • The word is used throughout the day and appears in lessons so students learn the word in context. At the end of the day, students and teacher come to a final definition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the teacher selecting vocabulary words (e.g., language central to comprehending the Guiding Question or the Draw and Label), students share ownership for identifying unfamiliar words. • Students are taught to use context clues, Greek or Latin root words and affixes, and reference materials to determine the meaning of unknown words. • Students teach the class new words, and are able to identify the strategies used to come to their definitions.

Summary

The number of words a child knows is directly related to their ability to talk about and describe their world and their thoughts. While vocabulary can be taught, most often children develop vocabulary through hearing it in use and inferring and deducing the meaning. Vocabulary OUT of context is much more difficult for them to learn. The sheer number of words in a child’s vocabulary is a predictor of reading comprehension and academic success.

Throughout their school career, students will encounter thousands of new and unfamiliar words in speech, literature, textbooks, lectures, and other media. One of the hallmarks of proficient readers is their ability to monitor their understanding of unknown words or concepts, and

consequently use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words. Therefore, as teachers, it is critical that we model and provide multiple opportunities for students to examine text and utilize context to make thoughtful predictions of word meanings.

“Vocabulary in Context” is a strategy which exposing students to new vocabulary, but is designed to teach these critical inference skills. The Vocabulary in Context strategy can also be used as a vehicle to teach language arts subskills such as word study, synonyms, antonyms, word formations, analysis of roots and cognates, and multiple meanings, to name a few.

Implementation

At the start of the unit, key vocabulary is identified and selected by the teacher, as in the primary grades. These should be words that are central to student comprehension of the unit’s overarching ideas. In this circumstance, the teacher will introduce the word.

Teacher: “Students, in order to better help you understand our Guiding Question, I’d like to introduce you to a new vocabulary word: transformation. Say it with me— ‘transformation.’ [Teacher engages students in repetition of the word as a form of oral rehearsal.] Say it to the ceiling. Say it to the floor. Whisper it to your neighbor.”

Column 1: New Word

The word is recorded and the teacher then surveys the class asking how many students have heard/never heard the word before and records the results. This serves as both a quick assessment for the teacher to determine how many students have had previous exposure to the word, and also helps students activate their prior knowledge as they reflect on whether they know this word, or have heard or seen it before.

The teacher then shares the sentence with the students modeling how to read with fluency.

The years following 1850 brought a transformation to California by way of a transportation revolution, increased diversity, and agricultural and industrial growth.

S/he underlines the vocabulary word in the sentence and asks students to read the sentence with her several times, looking for clues in the sentence to the meaning of “transformation.” The teacher then asks students to share their predictions and reasoning. Asking students how they came up with their predictions is essential metacognitive work. It helps students to become aware of their thought process. In orally sharing their prediction with the class, it serves as a model for other students as to one approach to inferring meaning. In addition, having students share their reasoning provides the teacher with insight as to what connections students are making. During their share out, the teacher will probe them to share which words

in the sentence helped them make their prediction. Those words are then highlighted or underlined as important clue words.

The teacher indicates to students that they will uncover the final meaning of the word throughout the day. She shares a short (2-3 word) phrase or synonym with the students and provides a quick gesture or movement students will use every time they hear the word.

Teacher: Students, I will be using “transformation” as a signal for your attention. When I say, “transformation,” I want you to repeat the word and then respond with “a great change” while doing this gesture [hands opening like a butterfly from a chrysalis].

Throughout the day, the teacher uses the vocabulary word as a signal for transitions and is mindful of sharing the final meaning of the word with students as it arises during the day’s lessons. If the word is intentionally selected, it will come up multiple times in multiple contexts.

Column 2: Final Meaning

Later, after the teacher has taught a lesson/lessons that explored the content and used the word of the day multiple times in various contexts, the teacher returns to the Vocabulary in Context chart. S/he directs the class attention back to the sentence, and then asks students share the final meaning with a partner. The teacher then elicits a final meaning from the children and adds a student friendly definition, appropriate to the context. This is an excellent opportunity for the teacher to model comprehension skills through think aloud using context clues, affixes, or root words to demonstrate how to ascertain the meaning of an unfamiliar word.

S/he also adds a sketch as a non-linguistic representation, and if possible, writes the word in the students’ primary language (e.g. transformation—transformación). Conversely, for classes instructed bilingually, the English word would be written at this time. The teacher will point out cognates or false cognates whenever possible. This addition of the Spanish or English word should be in a different color.

Column #3: Language Arts Extensions

Once the final meaning is recorded, the teacher can return to the first column to model appropriate word work. For example, “transformation” is a noun, made up of the Latin suffix “trans” (across or beyond) and the root word “form” (shape). This work should be guided by the standards and appropriate to the needs of the students.

The teacher then moves to the 3rd column to model useful Language Arts Extensions. Again, based on the standards and objectives of the teacher, a skill or concept is selected to demonstrate. For example, the teacher may choose to examine other words with a similar



prefix, suffix, or root word to teach how to use that chunk as a clue to a word’s meaning. Or the teacher may choose to generate a list of synonyms and discuss shades of meaning and the importance of precision. There are many possibilities for the kind of work that can be done, however, it is best if just one skill or concept is selected and modeled.

Student Selected Vocabulary

After the initial weeks of a unit, the teacher will reach a point where it seems that the key vocabulary central to the unit has been introduced in some way. At this point, we turn the metacognitive lift of selecting a new word over to the students. During activities such as Research Rotations, Narrative Input, Chants, Mini-Lecture, and the like—students will encounter unknown vocabulary. The teacher should work with the class to generate banks of new words that can be drawn upon to continue the work of Vocabulary in Context.

Notes on Vocabulary in Context

Photos of Vocabulary in Context

The years following 1850 brought a change/difference transformation to California by way of a transportation revolution, increased diversity, ~~and~~ and agricultural and industrial growth.

higher wages

Sentence with Target Word in Context

New Word H=heard it before NH=never heard	Final Meaning L1	Language Arts Extensions
<p>H=26 NH=2</p> <p><u>transformation</u> across/through beyond changing</p>	<p>a <u>complete</u> or <u>great</u> change</p> <p>from <u>transformación</u></p>	<p><u>transcontinental</u> transportation move <u>transfer</u></p>
<p>H=6 NH=21</p> <p><u>correspondence</u> noun: thing</p>	<p>① Communication by letters</p> <p>② Similarity or relationship</p> <p>in common</p> <p><u>correspondencia</u></p>	<p><u>correspond:</u> (verb) communicate</p> <p><u>correspondent:</u> (noun) a person who communicates with another</p>