Use Vocabulary: Grades 3–5

OVERVIEW:

Vocabulary is the building block of oral and written communication. Learning and using new vocabulary is a skill that students will practice and hone throughout their school career and life. When reading subject matter texts, students encounter content-specific words that are critical to their understanding of the topic. When students can read and understand this vocabulary, they are better able to comprehend these texts and express themselves orally and in writing. This toolkit includes lessons that can be used before, during, and after reading to build student vocabulary. The mini-lessons also provide an opportunity to assess students' prior knowledge as well as gauge how students apply and use strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Mini-Lesson I

Word Rating Organizer (15–20 minutes)

Directions: This strategy introduces students to key vocabulary before reading. Evaluating understanding of important words before reading not only provides information about who may need additional support but also activates students' prior knowledge and prepares them for learning.

- Distribute a **Word Rating organizer** to each student.

- Display and/or read the vocabulary words from the text, inviting students to record them on their organizer. Note that each lesson in *Expedition: Learn!* includes a list of vocabulary words. In addition to these words, you may wish to add other words from the text or words that are essential to a conceptual understanding of the topic.

- Introduce each of the words to students, reading aloud the word and its definition. In addition, consider sharing a sentence that uses the word in context. After introducing the word to students, invite them to complete the row for the word, indicating their level of familiarity by marking in the box. Students should add the definition and a symbol or image that represents the meaning of the word.

- As students encounter the words in context, encourage them to revisit their definitions and visuals, revising their definitions as necessary. Reinforce the importance of being able to state a definition in their own words.

- At the end of the lesson, ask students to use the rating scale (and a different color pen) to indicate their current knowledge of each of the words. Encourage students to consider how well they would be able to use the word in their writing or conversations as they rank their knowledge of the word.

- As students continue to develop their knowledge of the topic and related concepts, invite them to return to their rankings and definitions. Reinforce that as we deepen our word knowledge, we can refine our definitions to reflect new understanding.

Mini-Lesson II

Use Context to Determine Meaning (20–30 minutes)

Directions: Research has shown that students learn new vocabulary best through exposure to the words through both reading and listening. Given that most vocabulary comes from these indirect learning experiences, students must receive explicit instruction of what to do when they encounter an unknown word while they are reading. One strategy is to use context clues to determine the word's meaning. This lesson provides direct instruction and practice in identifying the ways in which authors present the meaning of key vocabulary and using those clues to define unknown words. Note that the teaching suggestions provided are based on the article "Extinction" from the lesson "Extinct Plants and Animals," available in *Expedition: Learn!*

- Reinforce for students that while reading, they are likely to encounter words that are new to them. Share that when they come across unknown words, they can often use the context, or words around the unknown word, to determine their meaning.

- Display and review the **Types of Context Clues anchor chart.** Note that depending on previous learning, some students may benefit from being introduced to each type of context clue one at a time before engaging in this lesson. This can be done by sharing the type of context clue and then providing students with an authentic example of each.

- Introduce the text students will be reading. Share that as they read, they will pay attention to the key vocabulary words and notice how they can use context clues to determine their meaning.

- Distribute the **Using Context Clues organizer** and ask students to record the key vocabulary words they will encounter while reading.

- Model the process by engaging students in a shared reading of the text, strategically stopping when you encounter a vocabulary word and demonstrating how to use context clues to determine the meaning, recording on a displayed organizer. For example:
    - After the sentence, "Tall tree-like plants called Sigillaria once grew around the world. Sigillaria looked a little like plants we know today.": Highlight the vocabulary word *Sigillaria* and think aloud about how the context helps you determine the meaning.
        - *I don't know the word* Sigillaria*, but the text gives me the definition in the sentence: tall tree-like plants. The text also includes an illustration of* Sigillaria*, so I can infer that they are tall plants with a skinny trunk or stem.*
    - Model recording the definition (*tall tree like plant with a skinny trunk or stem*) and how you determined the meaning (*text feature*) on the organizer.

- Continue reading, stopping after the sentence, "Floods also cause extinctions. So do droughts. Flood and droughts can destroy habitats. How would a fish survive if all the water in its habitat dried up?" Highlight the word *droughts* as an unknown word that is essential to understanding the text.

- Invite students to turn and talk to discuss with a partner how they can determine the meaning of *droughts*. Encourage students to share a definition, referencing the Types of Context Clues anchor chart as needed.

- Debrief, strategically calling on students to share the definition (*lack of water and rain*) and how they determined the meaning (*antonym-flood* and *description-dried up*).

- Release students to continue reading the article, stopping when they come to unknown words to add them to their organizer and practicing using context clues to determine their meaning.

Mini-Lesson III

## Morphology and Word Parts (20–30 minutes)

Directions: While most vocabulary development occurs through exposure to words within context, explicit instruction in morphology has been shown to be a critical component to students' vocabulary development. Explicit instruction in how to segment words and use affixes and roots has been shown to expand students' vocabulary. The following teaching suggestions are based on the text "Movement of Light" in the *Expedition: Learn!* lesson "Introduction to Light Energy."

- Display the **Using Roots and Affixes to Find Word Meaning anchor chart**. Share that sometimes when we are reading, we might come across unknown words that can be broken into word parts to help us determine the meaning. As needed, share the following definitions:
    - *prefix: a group of letters that are added to the beginning of a root word to change its meaning*
    - *root word: a part that can stand alone or have prefixes or suffixes added to it*
    - *suffix: groups of letters that are added to the ending of a root word to change its meaning*

- Distribute the **Word Parts organizer** and invite students to record the words they will encounter while reading (*absorbs*, *completely*, *interacts*, *reflects*, *refraction*).

- Conduct a first read of the article, stopping when you come to a word that can be analyzed using word parts. Model the process, working through the steps on the anchor chart and recording on a displayed copy of the organizer.
    - Stop after: "Think about a lamp with a regular light bulb in the middle of a **completely** dark room."
        - ➢ Analyze the word for recognizable morphemes, both in the roots and affixes.
            - *"I see the word* completely*. I know that* complete *means "whole, total, or entire." I also know that* -ly *means "like, or the way something is being done."*
        - ➢ Use the word parts to think of a possible meaning of the word.
            - *I think* completely *in this sentence must mean "totally."*
        - ➢ Substitute your definition for the target word and see if it makes sense.
            - *Think about a lamp with a regular light bulb in the middle of a* **totally** *dark room.*
        - ➢ *Emphasize that the word makes sense, so you can conclude that* completely *means* totally.

- Continue reading, stopping after, "Later in this lesson, you will read more about how light **interacts** with different types of matter and how that affects what people see."

- Invite students to work through the steps on the anchor chart. For example:
    - *The prefix* inter- *means "between."*
    - *The root word* acts *means "does or behaves."*
    - *Therefore,* interacts *must mean "behaves between."*

- Release students to read the rest of the article, stopping when they comes to one of the vocabulary words to practice using word parts to determine the meaning. For example:
    - reflects*: re-: back, again; flect: to bend*
    - refraction*: re-: back, again; fract: to break, -tion: action of*
    - absorbs*: ab-: away; sorb: soak up*

- Debrief the task, asking students to share how word parts helped them determine the meaning of the words they encountered.

Check for Understanding

If you observe …	Then try …
students struggling to retain word meanings	having students create a personal glossary with the vocabulary word, a definition in their own words, and a quick sketch of the word's meaning. Research has shown that drawing pushes students to process the information visually, kinesthetically, and semantically, leading to better understanding and retention of the word's meaning.
students having difficulty using affixes to determine the meaning of words	creating visual representations of affixes that students add to as they come across words that use that affix. For example, the prefix *un-*could be represented by a large "no" symbol (circle with a back slash through it). Students could write words that they identify in their reading (*unfair, unimportant, unsolved*) on the symbol. To further learning, these visuals could be grouped together as appropriate (e.g., one corner of the room is the "no" zone, featuring the prefixes *dis-, im-, in-, ir-, non-,* and *un-*).
students have difficulty using the words they have learned	inviting students to create a digital glossary for each unit of study. Using Prezi, Flip, or other recording software, invite students to choose a word from the unit, create a definition, and use the word in a sentence. Create a QR code to make the glossary accessible to students as they work their way through the unit.

Word Rating

Directions:

1. Record each of the key vocabulary words on the organizer.

2. Consider your current knowledge of the words. Place a check mark in the square that best describes your familiarity with each word.

3. For those words you know well, add a definition.

4. As you read and learn more about these words, add or revise your definitions.

5. At the end of the learning activity, use a different color to add a new check mark to the square that shows your knowledge of the word.

Vocabulary Word	Know It Well	Have Seen/ Heard It	Not Yet	Definition/ Visual Representation

Types of Context Clues

DEFINITION	**The word is defined in the text.**
	A **census** is a <u>count of the people who live in a country</u>.
	The text tells us exactly what a **census** is—it's the official counting of people that live in a country.

DESCRIPTION	**The word is described so that the reader can determine the meaning.**
	They went to the U.S. because of a terrible **famine** in Ireland. At that time, Ireland was ruled by England. Wealthy English families owned most of the land in Ireland. The Irish people who farmed the land had little money. They <u>relied on potato crops for food</u> and to make money. But in 1845, <u>mold destroyed the potato crops</u>. About one million Irish people starved.
	The text tells us that Irish people relied on potatoes for food and that in 1845, mold destroyed the crops and a million people starved. This is a description of a **famine**.
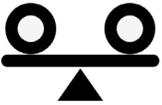
SYNONYM	**A word with a similar meaning to the word is provided.**
	These animals have stomachs with many **compartments**, <u>or sections</u>, which help them eat in this interesting way.
	The text tells us that another word for **compartments** is *sections*.

ANTONYM	**A word or phrase with an opposite meaning is contrasted with the word.**
	Japan is a small Asian country made up of a string of islands. Japan doesn't have much farmland, but it is <u>surrounded by ocean</u>. Mongolia is another country in Asia. <u>Unlike Japan</u>, Mongolia is **landlocked**.
	Japan is surrounded by water. The text says that <u>unlike Japan</u>, Mongolia is **landlocked**. This tells us that Mongolia is surrounded by land, not water.

TEXT FEATURE	**A picture, diagram, or other text feature is used to explain the word.**
	In cities, many immigrants lived in crowded apartment buildings called **tenements**.
	Because the text includes an illustration of **tenements**, the reader is able to see that they were run-down and crowded apartments.

Using Context Clues

Directions:

1. Record the vocabulary words.

2. As you read and encounter the words, use the context to determine the meaning. Write the meaning of each word.

3. Explain how you determined the meaning of the word.

Types of Context Clues

DEFINITION   **DESCRIPTION**   **SYNONYM**   **ANTONYM**   **TEXT FEATURE**

Word	Meaning	How I Determined Meaning

Using Roots and Affixes to Find Word Meaning

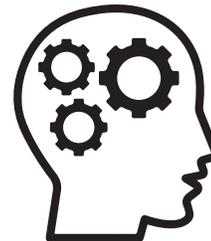**1.** Identify the unknown word.

2. Analyze the word for recognizable morphemes in the roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

replay
re
play

3. Use the word parts to think of a possible meaning of the word.

4. When you figure out what the word might mean, substitute your definition for the unknown word and see if it makes sense.

Word Parts

1. Record the word part.

2. Identify the type.

3. Write the meaning.

4. Write an example.

5. Draw a picture to help you remember what the word part means.

Word Part	Type (circle one)	Meaning	Examples	Picture
-ly	prefix / (suffix)	like, or the way something is done	*completely*	
	prefix suffix			
	prefix suffix			
	prefix suffix			
	prefix suffix			
	prefix suffix			
	prefix suffix			