

Selecting Vocabulary Words

Considerations for Selecting Vocabulary to Teach		Questions to Ask
Representativeness	Instructional time should focus on concepts and not so much on words that function only as labels in a particular reading.	Is the concept represented by the word critical to understanding the lesson, activity or text? If so, this word would be a good candidate for direct instruction.
Repeatability	Words that are worth teaching are those that will be useful and will be used often.	Will the word be used again during the school year in this class? If so, this word would be a good candidate for direct instruction.
Transportability	Words that are worth teaching are those that will appear in many subjects or content areas.	Will the word be used in other subject areas or classes? If so, this word would be a good candidate for direct instruction.
Contextual Analysis	If student can use context clues to determine the word meaning, then <i>direct instruction</i> is not necessary.	Can students use context clues to determine meaning? If so, consider not directly teaching the word.
Structural Analysis	Words that contain affixes and Latin or Greek root words that students are familiar with and can be analyzed through structural analysis are not good candidates for <i>direct instruction</i> .	Can students use structural analysis to determine meaning? If so, consider not directly teaching the word.
Cognitive Load	The number of vocabulary words should reflect the development level of the students and the length of the reading. Most teachers agree that no more than 10 unfamiliar words should be introduced at any one time.	Have I identified too many words? If so, consider not directly teaching the word.

Source: From *Language Arts Workshop: Purposeful Reading and Writing Instruction* (p. 275) by N. Frey and D. Fisher, 2007. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.