

# Vocabulary Building Activity: Possible Sentences

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## Standards and Benchmarks (see page 3)

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## Activity Description

This *before-learning* activity introduces students to Tier 3 vocabulary words (low frequency words that are content specific) in text with which they will interact. Students will generate possible meanings of targeted vocabulary words. They will then evaluate the definitions and revise their predicted meanings, drawing from the text and class discussion. This activity can be completed individually or with a partner.

NOTE: Brozo (2017) cautions that this activity may not be appropriate for all topics, particularly those “containing a large number of domain-specific vocabulary for which students may have little if any prior knowledge” (p. 234).

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## Grade Level

6-12

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## Objectives

Students will be able to

- define [targeted vocabulary words], and
  - revise their understanding about [targeted vocabulary words].
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## Time Required

45 minutes

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## Materials

- A copy of or access to the text with the targeted vocabulary words for each student
  - Sheet of lined notebook paper, a pencil, and an ink pen, one of each for each student
  - Method to display vocabulary words, such as a dry erase board, a document camera, or an interactive whiteboard
  - Method to record and display students’ possible sentences, such as a dry erase board, a document camera, or a document displayed on a screen
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## Preparation

- Determine the text with which students will be interacting (i.e., article, textbook chapter, or digital media) for the lesson or unit.
  - Select 4-6 Tier 3 vocabulary words from the text for which the meaning can be determined through the text.
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## Procedure

1. Ensure each student has a sheet of lined notebook paper and a pencil.
2. Introduce the lesson topic and display the selected vocabulary words.
3. Instruct each student to choose two vocabulary words. Check to ensure that at least two students are writing a possible sentence for each word.
4. For each selected vocabulary word, instruct students to write a possible sentence that could appear in the text they are about to read (2 sentences total).
5. For each vocabulary word, invite 2-3 students to share (read aloud) the sentence they wrote.
6. As students read aloud their sentences, record their sentence exactly the way they said it, and display it so that all students can see it.
7. Instruct students to interact with the text (e.g., independently read, read aloud as a class, or participate in a digital presentation).
8. Once students have read the text, evaluate as a class each of the possible sentences students generated by focusing on the following questions (Brozo, 2017, p. 233):
  - Which sentences are accurate?
  - Which need further elaboration?
  - Which cannot be validated because the passage did not deal specifically with them?
9. As a class, decide on a definition for each vocabulary word based upon the text.
10. Write and display the mutually agreed upon vocabulary definitions/meanings for students to see and refer to.
11. Ensure each student has an ink pen and instruct them to flip their sheet of notebook paper over.
12. Instruct students to write new sentences for the same two vocabulary words.
13. For each vocabulary word, invite 2-3 students to share (read aloud) the new sentences they wrote.
14. As students individually share their sentences, the rest of the class should evaluate the sentences by referring to the class-created definitions and confirming that the sentence matches the class-created definition.

## Reference

Brozo, William G. *Disciplinary and Content Literacy for Today's Adolescents: Honoring Diversity and Building Competence*. Sixth Edition. Guilford Press, 2017.

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## Standards and Benchmarks

### Middle School

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.4

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.4

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.4

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

### High School

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.4

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key or terms over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.