

Vocabulary Building Activity: Semantic Map for Grades 3-12

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Standards and Benchmarks (see pages 3-4)

Activity Description

A semantic map is a visual graphic organizer that assists students in making connections between their prior knowledge and experiences to new vocabulary words and concepts. It typically involves webbing: The vocabulary word or concept is placed in a center circle and then students' associations are linked from the center circle. Students can also create branches of connections from their associations. Semantic maps can be used before, during, or after a lesson to help build connections and activate knowledge or used as a formative assessment. They can be completed individually, in pairs/small groups, or as an entire class. In this activity, teachers and students are encouraged to create their own semantic map.

Grade Level

3-12

Objectives

Students will be able to

- define [targeted vocabulary word or concept],
 - illustrate the connections and relationships to [targeted vocabulary word or concept], and
 - revise their understanding about [targeted vocabulary word or concept].
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Time Required

30 minutes

Materials

- Sheet of blank (unlined) paper and a pencil, one of each for each student
 - An assortment of different colored highlighters
 - Timer
 - Method to display vocabulary word or concept, such as a dry erase board, a document camera, or an interactive whiteboard
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Preparation

- Select a vocabulary word or concept that relates to the lesson or unit and that offers multiple connection points.

Procedure

1. Display the targeted vocabulary word or concept.
2. Distribute a sheet of blank paper and a pencil to each student.
3. Set the timer for 3-5 minutes and instruct students to list everything they know, or think they know, about the targeted vocabulary word or concept.
4. When the timer goes off, instruct students to mark up their list by determining possible groupings or categories (i.e., subheadings). Tell them to use a highlighter to identify information that belongs together as a group or category. Then tell students to create a label for the group, if they haven't already, that describes or names the group/category.
5. Instruct students to repeat the highlighting with different colored highlighters and create labels for groupings until all the information on their list has been sorted into a group.
6. Instruct students to turn over their paper and create a semantic map based upon the different groups of information they identified in their list. Remind students that group/category labels connect to the target vocabulary word and that information in a group/category should come from the group/category label.
7. Pair students up. Instruct students to take turns sharing their semantic maps by responding to the following questions:
 - What do our semantic maps have in common?
 - What is different about our semantic maps?
8. Allow time for students to add to or revise their semantic map based on their discussion with a partner.
9. During or after the lesson/unit, students should add to or revise their semantic map to account for new learning and connections.

Standards and Benchmarks

Elementary

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.4

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 5 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.4

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.6

- Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (e.g., however, although, nevertheless, similarly, moreover, in addition).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.6

- Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., quizzed, whined, stammered) and that are basic to a particular topic (e.g., wildlife, conservation, and endangered when discussing animal preservation).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.6

- Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., After dinner that night we went looking for them).

Middle School

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.4

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

Standards and Benchmarks

Middle School (continued)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.4

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.6 and CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.6

- Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

High School

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11-12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9-10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.6 and CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6

- Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career-readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.