

# Vocabulary Building & Comprehension: Learning with VOCABULARY SNAPSHOTS

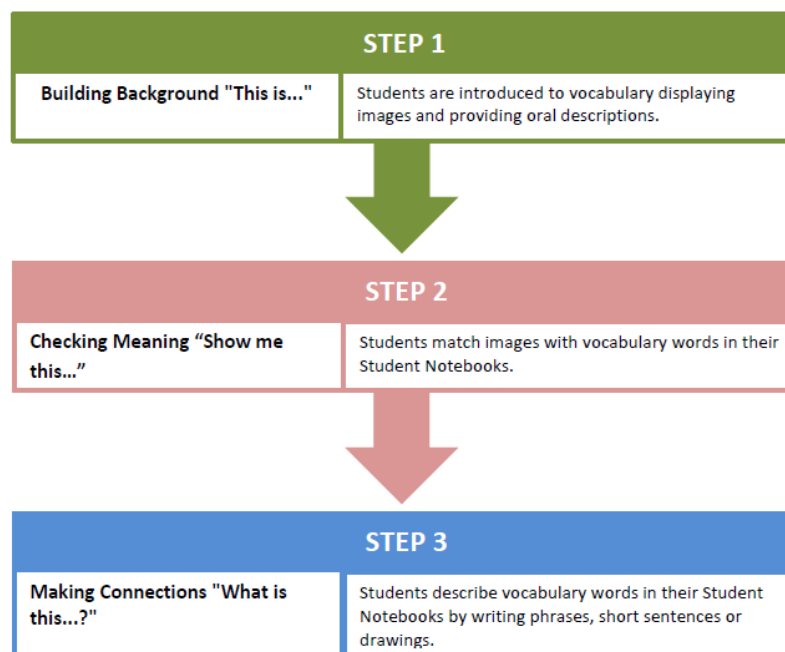
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## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Since ELL students must know approximately 93% of the words they hear in order to learn new words from oral input, visual scaffolding is essential in making instruction more comprehensible. **Vocabulary Snapshots** are supplementary activities designed to provide instructional support for ELL students. Using images breaks vocabulary instruction into steps that allow linguistically diverse students to make connections between what they see and what they hear. This process contributes to language development as well as increased student participation.

The **Vocabulary Snapshots** activity introduces ELL students to image-supported key words from the unit text and guides them to write, or draw, a description of the word. This is a three-step process in which students move from vocabulary introduction to application of vocabulary knowledge (see below).

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**Vocabulary Snapshots** are recommended as pre-teaching activities. The sidebars on the first pages of **Lessons 1-5 and 7** suggest targeted vocabulary relevant to stories and art in those lessons. Timing for these activities will vary based on students' English language proficiency levels and content knowledge. The 1-2-3 Steps format can be followed for the words in any lesson. A sample lesson using 1-2-3 Steps with a **Vocabulary Snapshot** is provided on the next page.

# Vocabulary Building & Comprehension: VOCABULARY SNAPSHOTS – A Sample Lesson

## STEP 1: BUILDING BACKGROUND: “THIS IS...”

**Process:** Start the activity by writing the vocabulary words for a new text one at a time and displaying the visual icons, using a document camera and/or interactive unit image/word wall. For each word provide a descriptive definition, appropriate for the students’ English language proficiency level, using the visual icons.

Displaying and labeling vocabulary in both English and students’ native language will contribute to content and language comprehension.

### Suggested Dialogue:

Before we begin today’s lesson, we are going to learn some new words that will help us read the next story in the *Arts for Learning* unit. We are going to be looking at pictures to help us understand these new words and later we are going to write (or draw pictures) about them.

*Show the first image and provide a descriptive definition.*

**This is a cellar**... a cellar is the lowest part of a house or building and is below ground. Sometimes the cellar is the place where we store boxes, bicycles or things we don’t need all the time, like winter clothes.

**This is a cellar.**



**Sample of native language vocabulary for *cellar*:**

- подвал -**Russian**
- keller-**German**
- sótano- **Spanish**
- 地下室 –**Chinese**

*Continue introducing the rest of the lesson’s vocabulary words following the same process with appropriate wait time between words.*

## STEP 2: CHECKING MEANING: “SHOW ME THIS...”

**Process:** Distribute the **Unit 3 Texts**. Have students open to **Vocabulary Snapshots, page 10**. The **Vocabulary Snapshots** in the **Unit 3 Texts** have the same vocabulary for Roberto Clemente as here in **Resources** (starting on **page 20**), with the addition of spaces in **Unit 3 Texts** for students to write or draw definitions (in Step 3).

Using a document camera and/or interactive unit image/word wall, cover all vocabulary labels and randomly display each of the images, one at a time. Ask students to identify each image

orally (“**This is...**”) and in their **Vocabulary Snapshots** by drawing a circle around the vocabulary word (“**Show me...**”).

### **Suggested Dialogue:**

Let’s continue to learn about these words. I am going to show you each picture again, but this time you are going to tell what I am showing you by saying the word aloud and then finding its picture and drawing a circle around it. Open your **Unit 3 Texts to Vocabulary Snapshots, page 10.**

*Show the first image and request “This is...” and “Show me this...”*

**What is this?** (Students respond “This is...” with vocabulary word for the image.) Now find this image on your **Vocabulary Snapshots** page and draw a circle around it. **Show me...** (Check for understanding as students circle the image on their **Vocabulary Snapshots** page.)

*Continue displaying the vocabulary words following the same process with appropriate wait time between words.*

### **STEP 3: MAKING CONNECTIONS: “WHAT IS THIS...?”**

**Process:** Replace all vocabulary labels and randomly display each of the images. Ask students to write and/or draw a description of the word/image on the **Vocabulary Snapshots** page in their **Unit 3 Texts**.

### **Suggested Dialogue:**

I am going to show you each picture again, and you get to show me what you have learned by describing – in writing (or drawing) – each word.

*Show the first image and request “What is this...?” for students to describe the image.*

**What is this?** (Show image.) Think for a moment. Now find this image on your **Vocabulary Snapshots** page and describe this word by writing (or drawing) about it in the box below the picture. (Check for understanding as students describe the image on their pages.)

*Continue displaying the vocabulary words following the same process with appropriate wait time between words.*

### **STEP 4: CONTINUE VOCABULARY CONNECTIONS DURING THE UNIT**

**Process:** Keep the vocabulary labels and images posted in the room as you explore the poems, so students can refer to them to reinforce understanding and increase participation.

# VOCABULARY

## Unit 4 *Planting A Community*

### **LITERACY VOCABULARY**

**Annotating the text:** Annotating is a means to create an interactive relationship with the text by circling or underlining words and phrases and writing questions and thoughts in the margins

**Making Inferences:** Inferring is the process of taking what is in the text, but not explicitly stated by the author, and combining it with relevant background knowledge to make meaning.

**Text-to-text Connections:** Making connections between or within different texts. In this unit, text-to-text connections occur between character vignettes.

**Theme:** In a story, a theme is a big idea, or one of several underlying ideas and lessons, that give the story its meaning. This unit instructs on character themes for each chapter and overall central theme for the book.

### **ART VOCABULARY**

**Dynamics** – The relative volume of music or sound, ranging from soft to loud.

**Duration** – Describes how long a single tone or sound lasts over time. For example, the sound from a triangle may have a relatively long duration; a wood block or two sticks will create a sound of short duration.

**Pitch** – The location of a musical sound or tone, ranging from high to low.

**Rondo Form** – A classical music form that includes two or more episodes (B and C) and a recurring theme (A) so that the resulting scheme might be A B A C A D A. In this unit, rondo form has been selected to organize the individual characters' themes and the central story theme of *Seedfolks* into one compositional piece.

**Theme** – In music, a theme is a sound or series of sounds (rhythmic or melodic) that create a musical idea, which is important to the structure of the composition.

**Timbre** – Timbre is the quality or color of a sound. Words to describe timbre include reedy, dark, flighty, light, bright, bold, powerful, brassy, harsh, tinny, ringing, thin, muffled, sharp, or fuzzy.

## OUT OF SCHOOL READING

### Unit 4 *Planting A Community*

**Purpose:** As early as first or second grade, some of your students may have decided that “reading is not for me.” They may have experienced difficulties in learning to read. They may have been turned off by assigned readings that were of little or no interest to them or were beyond their reading level. Once students make that decision, it can be challenging to change their minds, but it is imperative to do so, particularly for disadvantaged students. *There is no other activity besides large quantities of outside reading that has been shown to be associated with low-privileged students who outscore high-privileged students on national skills assessments.* Through outside reading, students build vocabulary, learn knowledge, and increase their reading speed and comprehension abilities. And quantity matters. In one well-known study, fourth through sixth graders who read a lot significantly outscored non-avid readers (with the same decoding ability) on these four separate tests: word knowledge, verbal fluency, vocabulary, and general information. The two groups scored the same on tests of non-verbal intelligence, decoding, and spelling, which strongly suggests they had the same basic abilities to read – it was the amount of reading they did that mattered. As the researchers put it, “Reading makes you smarter.” Our A4L units can be initial steps in changing students’ minds about reading and showing them that they can experience deep, personal connections to written material. It is critical, however, that students don’t stop with the texts in the unit, but instead use them as a springboard to a rich life of reading outside the classroom.

**How to Support throughout the Unit:** There are two powerful motivators for outside reading that you can use throughout the unit: Curiosity and Personal Connections. Prior to the unit, confer with your school librarian about the reading levels in your class and the personal interests that your students have. Collect from the school library or your own classroom library as many picture books and novels that are good fits with those reading levels and interests. Create a spot in your classroom that can serve as the “Treasure Pile” for all of these books. After an initial discussion, send students whenever possible to the Treasure Pile. Your goal is to make students curious about these books and to convince them that certain books can hold great personal interest. You can achieve this goal by knowing your students well and by dropping hints such as, “You know, Mary, that sounds like a book you in particular would love since the girl is a singer like you,” or “Emilio, you might really like this one: the boy loves to invent things, just like you do.” Be sure to have a system for students to check out these books and bring them home. Research shows that giving students access to books is vitally important, particularly in low-income areas.

**Resources for Matching Texts to Student Interests:** You may find it helpful to learn more about your students’ interests by giving them interest surveys to fill out. Templates for these surveys, as well as many other tips for increasing pleasure reading among elementary students, are available in Steven Layne’s book, *Igniting a Passion for Reading* (2009, Stenhouse Publishers). Another great resource is Donna Lyn Miller’s *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child* (2009, John Wiley & Sons). Donna Lyn is a sixth grade teacher who writes passionately about her incoming sixth graders who have been turned off of reading in elementary school. She also describes how she uses students’ personal interests to change their minds about reading and turn them into book lovers who also succeed on standardized tests. Consider discussing with your colleagues how elementary schools might change some of their practices to decrease the need for these turn-arounds, and how A4L can be used as part of this change.

**Book Lists:** Your best resources for collecting books for outside reading that will interest your students and inspire their own book clubs are: 1) your knowledge of your students’ reading levels and interests and 2) your school librarian or media director’s knowledge of the school’s book collections. To get you started, here are some popular titles that include great characterization and relate to the unit’s theme of community.

To give you an indication of reading level, we provide for each book the level and points assigned to it by the Accelerated Reader formula (ATOS) and the Lexile formula. Accelerated Reader levels are given in recommended grades and months, and the length of the book is reflected in the point value; the more points awarded, the longer the book. Lexile levels can range from below 200 to above 1700. We also provide a table below, with information recently released by the Common Core State Standards, based on new research aimed at aligning text levels to the goals of the Standards. One of the major shifts for curriculum planning emphasized by the Common Core State Standards is an increase in the recommended complexity of texts that children read in order to improve reading comprehension. (For more information about this research and other measures of text complexity, as well as ways to use qualitative judgments and other considerations to further determine the complexity of a text and its match to a reader, see *Appendix A to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History, Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects*, released August 15, 2012.)

Please note that the Common Core State Standards model recognizes that quantitative leveling systems for books are still imperfect: for example, these systems do not include calculations based on the important roles that background knowledge and personal interest in a topic can play in enabling children to understand and enjoy a particular book. You should view the text levels provided here as *initial guidelines* only. The latest Common Core State Standards model for matching students to books urges teachers to use professional judgment in making decisions, keeping in mind that students with a high level of interest in a book are more likely to handle higher levels of text complexity. Keep in mind also that the levels of books that children can enjoy reading outside of school may not always be as high as the levels of books they can enjoy with more support provided during classroom instruction.

**Grade Bands and Text-Level Ranges Recommended by the Common Core State Standards**

Grade Level	Lexile Range	Accelerated Reader (ATOS) Range
2 - 3	420 – 820	2.75 – 5.14
4 - 5	740 – 1010	4.97 – 7.03

**Picture Books:**

*Subway Sparrow*, Leyla Torres, 1993, New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.

When a sparrow gets trapped in a subway car, the passengers band together to save it, even though they speak different languages.

AR Level: 1.6      Lexile: (Not available)  
AR Points: 0.5

*Smoky Night*, Eve Bunting, 1994, New York: Harcourt Brace & Company.

During the Los Angeles riots, a boy and his mother come to know their neighbor through the bond of their pet cats.

AR Level: 2.4  
AR Points: 0.5  
Lexile: 360

*Blackout*, John Rocco, 2011, New York: Hyperion Books.

A power outage in the big city brings neighbors and families together.

AR Level: (Not available)

AR Points: (Not available)

Lexile: (Not available)

**Novels:**

*Mockingbird*, Kathryn Erskine, 2010, New York: Philomel Books.

A fifth grade girl with Asperger's syndrome learns to deal with her brother's death after a school shooting.

AR Level: 3.6

AR Points: 5

Lexile: 630

*Waiting for Normal*, Leslie Connor, 2008, New York: HarperCollins Children's Books.

A 12-year-old girl reaches out to her neighbors for support while living with a neglectful mother in a trailer on a city street.

AR Level: 3.7

AR Points: 7

Lexile: 570

*Hound Dog True*, Linda Urban, 2011, New York: Harcourt Children's Books.

The shy, 12-year-old niece of the school janitor starts fifth grade at a brand new school.

AR Level: 4.1

AR Points: 3

Lexile: 710

*Glory Be*, Augusta Scattergood, 2012, New York: Scholastic Press.

In 1964, an 11-year-old girl finds herself in the midst of racial intolerance when the town votes to close the pool rather than integrate it.

AR Level: 4.3

AR Points: 5

Lexile: 680

*Out of My Mind*, Sharon Draper, 2010, New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

An 11-year-old girl with cerebral palsy shocks everyone with her brilliance when she finally gets a device that lets her communicate.

AR Level: 4.3

AR Points: 8

Lexile: 700

*Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life*, Wendy Maas, 2006, New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Jeremy gets a mysterious locked box for his birthday, and his quest for the keys leads him to meet a wide range of New York City residents.

AR Level: 4.5

AR Points: 11

Lexile: 770

*One Crazy Summer*, Rita Williams-Garcia, 2010, New York: Amistad/HarperCollins.

Three African-American sisters leave their home and father in 1968 Chicago to see their mother who ran away years ago to California.

AR Level: 4.6

AR Points: 7

Lexile: 750

*Every Soul A Star*, Wendy Mass, 2008, New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Told from alternate points of view, this novel describes the lives of three young teens at a campground during a solar eclipse.

AR Level: 4.7

AR Points: 11

Lexile: 740

*Wonder*, R. J. Palacio, 2012, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

After being homeschooled all his life, a 10-year-old boy with a severe facial deformity bravely enters the fifth grade.

AR Level: 4.8

AR Points: 11

Lexile: 790

*A Long Walk to Water*, Linda Sue Park, 2010, New York: Clarion Books.

The separate stories and lives of a Sudanese girl and boy intersect in the need for clean water.

AR Level: 5.0

AR Points: 3

Lexile: 720

*Esperanza Rising*, Pam Muñoz Ryan, 2000, New York: Scholastic Press.

When a thirteen-year-old girl loses her father, she and her mother move from Mexico to California to work in the fields.

AR Level: 5.3

AR Points: 6

Lexile: 750

*The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child*, Francisco Jiménez, 1997, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

A Mexican child and his family move to California, living as migrant workers and moving from farm to farm.

AR Level: 5.3

AR Points: 4

Lexile: 880

*Return to Sender*, Julia Alvarez, 2009, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

A sixth-grade farm boy living in Vermont has nothing in common with a young migrant girl until his family hires hers.

AR Level: 5.5

AR Points: 11

Lexile: 890



**Research References on the Benefits of Outside Reading:**

Cunningham, C., & Stanovich, K. (2003). Reading can make you smarter. *Principal*, 34-39. Retrieved from: <http://gse.berkeley.edu/faculty/aecunningham/aecunningham.html>

Guthrie, J. T., Schafer, W. D., & Huang, C. (2001). Benefits of opportunity to read and balanced instruction on the NAEP. *Journal of Educational Research*, 94(3), 145-162.

Stanovich, K. E., & Cunningham, A. E. (1992). Studying the consequences of literacy within a literate society: The cognitive consequences of print exposure. *Memory & Cognition*, 20(1), 51-68.

# **TEXT SELECTION**

## **UNIT 4 *Planting A Community***

### **Text**

Fleischman, P. (1997). *Seedfolks*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.

### **Criteria for Text Selection:**

The following criteria guided the text selection:

- The text lends itself to a range of different themes.
- The text is challenging enough for students to make inferences during reading.
- The text is character-driven.