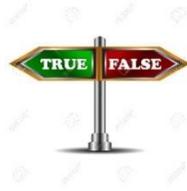


# Words! Words! Words! Active Learning and Engaging Exercises that Motivate and Challenge

Ann Ellsworth, PhD, Montana State University



What do you think?

1. Traditional approaches to vocabulary instruction fail to produce in-depth word knowledge.
2. More vocabulary instruction yields more vocabulary growth.
3. A definitional approach is defensible.
4. Powerful vocabulary instruction integrates instructed words with other word knowledge.
5. The function of having students master “big” vocabulary is to be able to impress people by using fancy words in place of simple ones.
6. An important goal of vocabulary instruction is to teach students new labels.
7. Repetition is critical in effective instruction.
8. Vocabulary instruction is effective if it makes students think about the meaning of the word— if it demands mental processing.
9. There is little difference between being able to say what a word means and being able to use it.
10. Teachers should use as rich a vocabulary as they can in their own speech without losing students.
11. Incidental word learning is best accomplished by \_\_\_\_\_.

## Tier 1 and Tier 2 Words

Tier 1	Tier 2	Part of speech
look closely at		
great fear		
sad, troubled		
confused		
next to		
difficult		
joker		
looking forward to _____		

## Word Relatives

fear: fearless, fearful, fearlessly, fearfully  
perfect: perfection, imperfect, imperfection, perfectly  
courtesy: courteous, discourtesy  
thought:  
friend:  
observe:

## Word Collections—Word Detectives



Good writers pay attention to language use. Consider this: When you read something that gives you pause and makes you take notice, the author has achieved his/her goal in communicating effectively with you, the reader. Often it is not just a word or two, but how the entire sentence is structured. Keep a log of interesting words or phrases that you encounter in your daily reading. Make it your goal to expand your speaking and writing vocabulary with these gems. How you decide to organize and personalize your e-notebook or hard copy log is up to you.

I suggest the following:

- (1) Write the word
- (2) Present how it is used in context
- (3) Annotate it in some way that is meaningful to you. (See my examples that follow.)

- **FULMINATE:** *Neighbors fulminate—or litigate—over one another’s exterior house colors or inflatable lawn ornaments*  
Probably this is a word derived from FUME or to become upset or be furious. I checked the dictionary, which says “to cause to explode or to condemn.”
- **ADJUDICATE:** *Who gets to adjudicate wrongness has preoccupied some of the best thinkers in every culture.*  
A fancy word for “to judge.” I know what this word means, but it’s not readily part of my speaking vocabulary. I chose it because I want to incorporate this word in my speaking and writing. It just sounds cool!
- **TREACHEROUS TERRAIN:** *Don’t forget the treacherous terrain of religion or politics....*  
What a fantastic pairing of “t-words”—it’s a far better way than simply saying “controversial topics.” And it’s a fine example of alliteration.
- **CONVENIENT ERASURE:** *The convenient erasure of past errors happens on a societal levels as well.*  
I love the pairing of these words. Instead of saying something is “easily dismissed,” the author uses “convenient erasure.” I want to remember this one. The image of “erasing” denotes permanence.
- **CONFETTI OF CONGRATULATIONS:** *...amid the confetti of congratulations, he stood woodenly, nonresponsive....*  
Alliteration with hard-c. Confetti makes me think of a just-opened piñata. This is a fresh way to use word.