

## Guidelines for Prioritizing Words to Address from a Text (to Support Reading Comprehension and Academic Vocabulary Acquisition)

Restrict your selections to approximately 6-8 words that are critical to comprehending the reading/lesson segment you intend to cover in one lesson (e.g., one Science chapter section; a 3-page passage from a 6-page short story.)

### Vocabulary Instructional Priorities:

- Choose **“big idea”** words that name or relate to the central concepts addressed in the reading selection (in subject areas outside of English Language Arts, these central lesson terms are typically highlighted by the publisher).
- Choose high-use, widely applicable **“academic tool kit”** words that students are likely to encounter in diverse materials across subject areas and grade levels (e.g., factor, compare, similar, subsequently, relevance).
- Choose high-use **“disciplinary tool kit”** words for your subject area that you consider vital for students to master at this age and proficiency level (e.g., metaphor, policy, economic, application, species, equation).
- Choose **“polysemous”** (multiple meaning) words that have a new academic meaning in a reading in addition to a more general, familiar meaning (e.g., wave (of immigrants) in U.S. History vs. a greeting or ocean wave).
- Identify additional academic words (not included in the reading selection) that students will need to know in order to engage in **academic discourse** about the central characters, issues and themes (especially true for narrative selections).

### Vocabulary Instructional Warnings:

- Don't overload students by dwelling on low-incidence words that students are unlikely to encounter in many or any contexts, especially words non-essential to comprehending the most essential content of the text (e.g., flamboyantly, coy, trestle, nitpick). Focus their cognitive capital on robust instruction and study of words that will serve them well in academic, social and professional contexts.
- Don't spend time reinforcing the meanings of words just because they appear in italics or bold face. Language Arts materials have the greatest tendency to focus heavily on unusual words within the text for the sophisticated reader, while neglecting to include a list of theme vocabulary (not included within the narrative text) that are vital for the less proficient reader to comprehend and adeptly discuss or write about the central thematic content.