

Learning Words, Learning How Words Work: The Foundation for Reading Complex Text



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Knowledge in the Digital Age

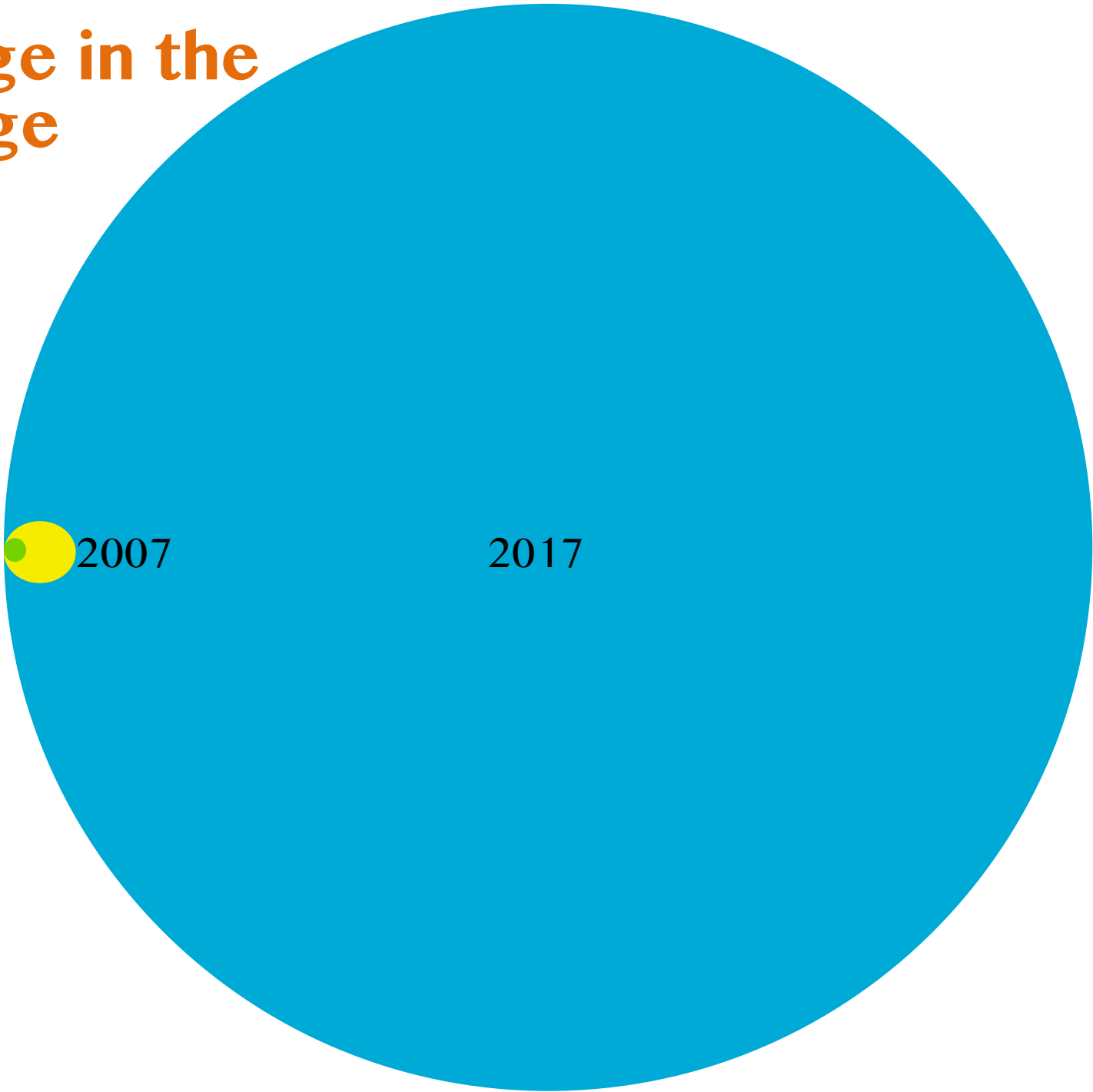
1986



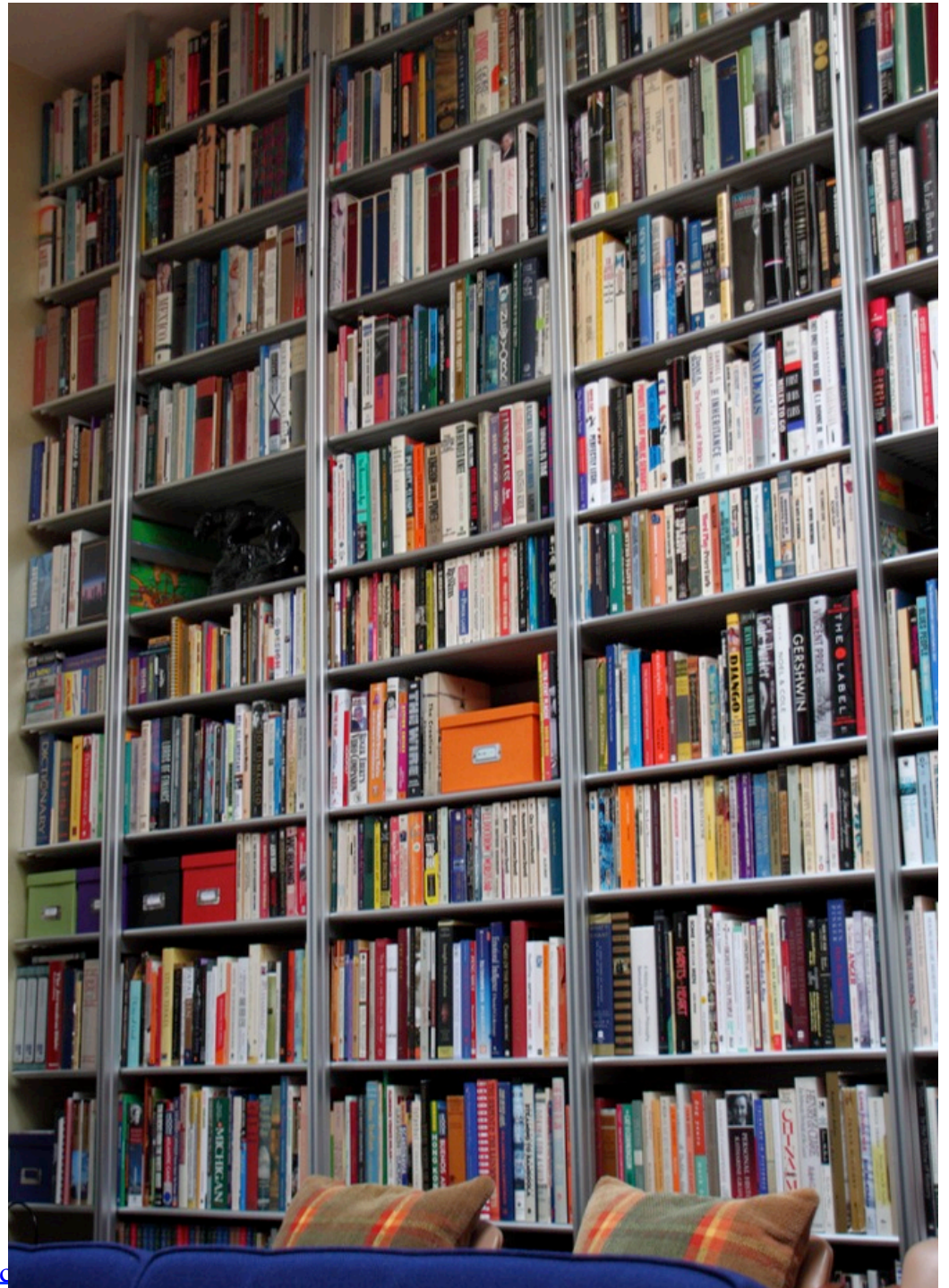
2007



2017



Knowledge
is “stored” in
texts and...



**texts typically
have more
rare words
than
conversations/
oral language.**





Alice

Abby

Alex

After one
day of
school
(one
penny=
500 words
of reading



After
one
week of
school



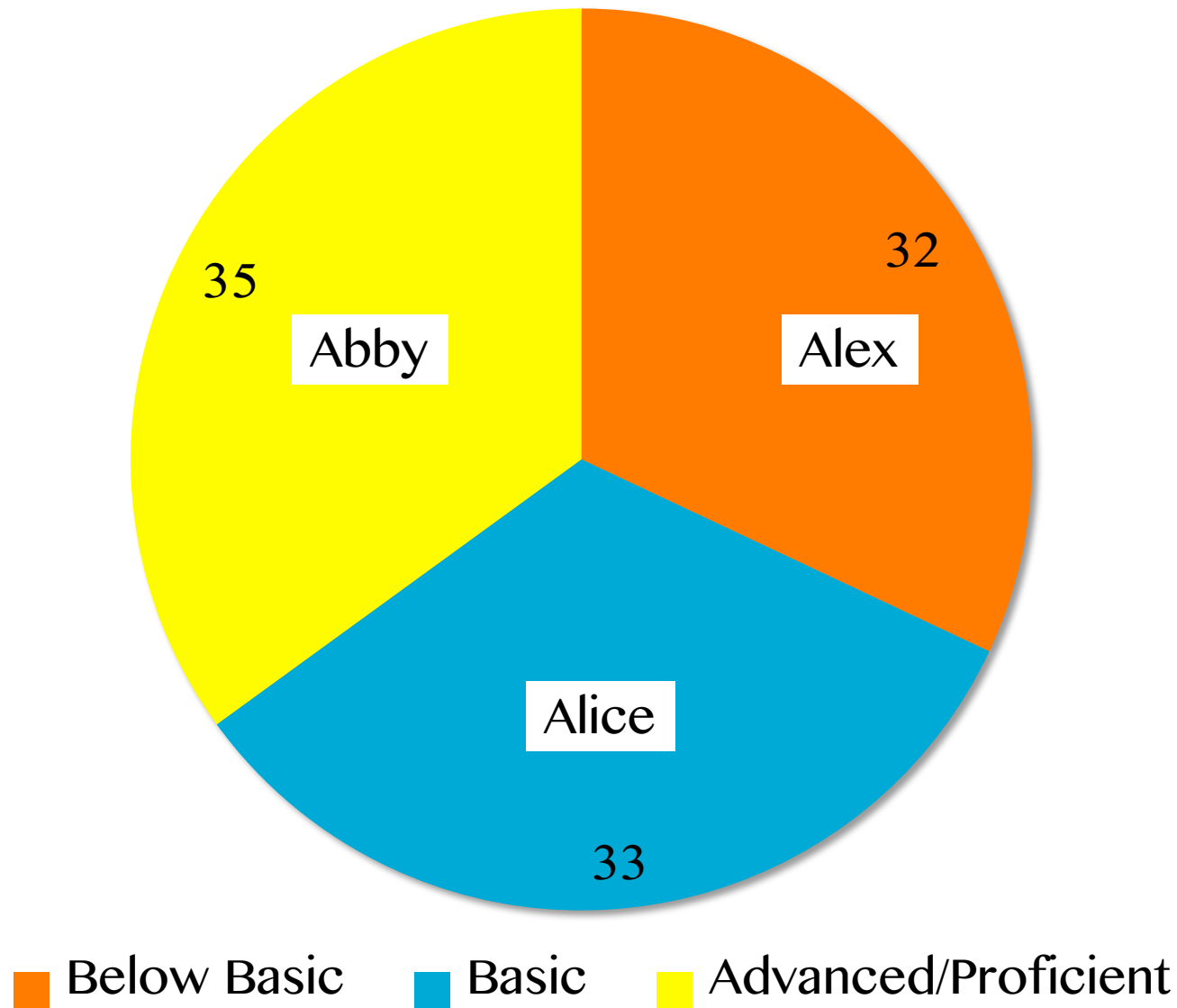
After
one
month
of
school



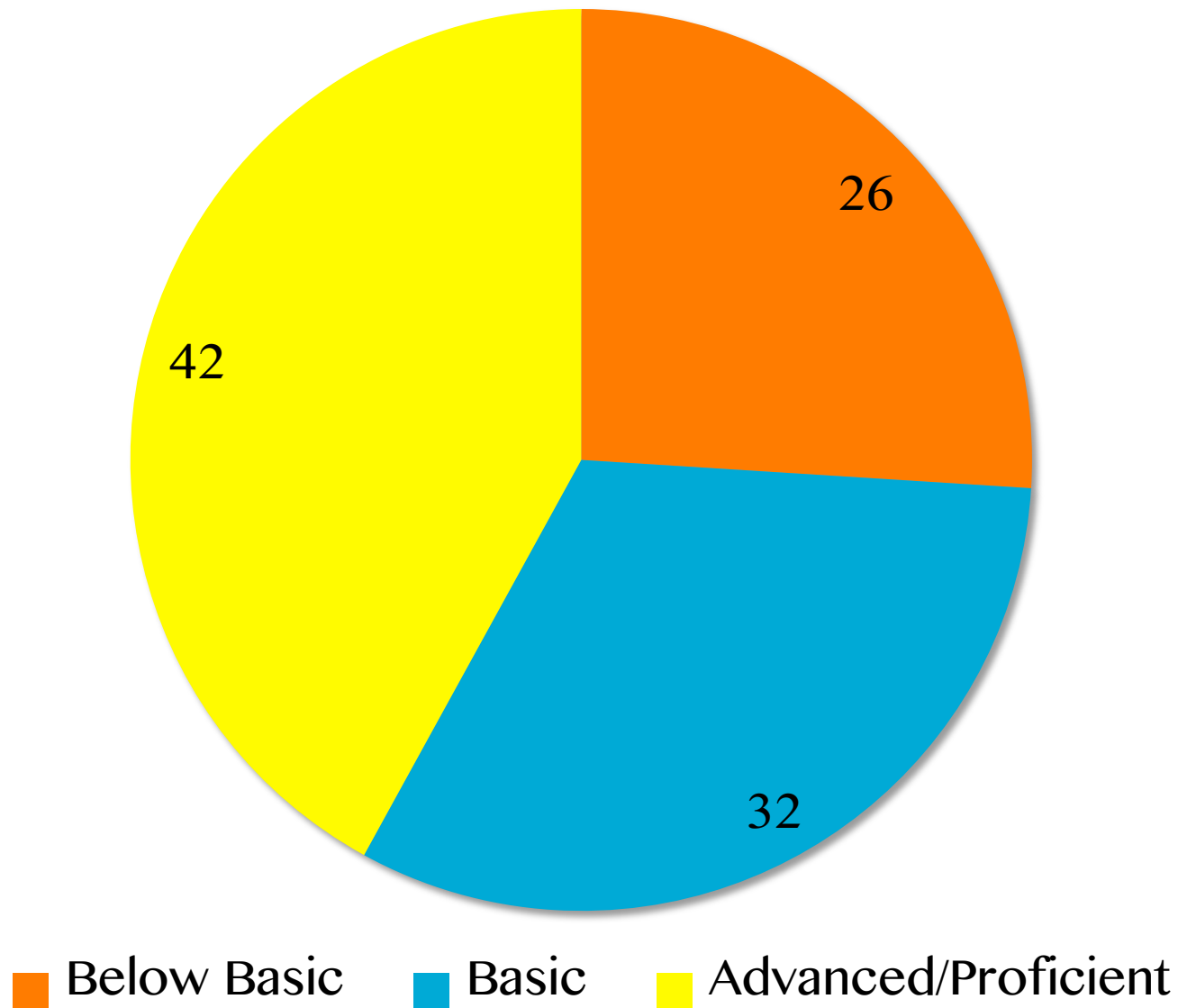
After
one
year of
school



NAEP 2015 Grade 4 (Reading)



NAEP 2015 Grade 4 (Reading): Pennsylvania



Quarters
= 500
new
words
gained
through
reading



After 5 years





Idea 1: The number of words in English far outnumbers opportunities to teach each individually.

ENGLISH HAS THREE DISTINCT MORPHOLOGICAL SYSTEMS.





ACTION 1: Have explicit conversations about rare vocabulary in ALL texts

Talking
Points

For
Teachers

1.1. Conversations about New Words in New Texts

Why?

- Develop the understanding that every complex text has new, challenging vocabulary. Vocabulary instruction gives students the means for figuring out new words in text, not instruction in every single word that might appear in new texts.

When?

- Talks about the vocabulary of new texts need to occur across a school year (with extra doses prior to assessment periods).

How?

- Take a portion of the text (25 or 50 words is enough). Use a highlighter to mark the words in the 1,000-2,000 most-frequent words (list on textproject.org)
- Mark the words that are potentially challenging with a different colored highlighter. (List of 4,000 simple word families at:
<http://textproject.org/classroom-materials/lists-and-forms/lists/word-zones-for-5-586-most-frequent-words/>)

--An example of a snippet of text for a board/projection is the following, which comes from a sample assessment for Grade 7

[http://www.parcconline.org/samples/english-language-arts-literacy/grade-7-reading-informational-text-\(Amelia-Earhart-2\)](http://www.parcconline.org/samples/english-language-arts-literacy/grade-7-reading-informational-text-(Amelia-Earhart-2))

When 10-year old Amelia Mary Earhart saw her first plane at a state fair, she was not impressed. "It was a thing of rusty wire and wood and looked not at all interesting," she said. It wasn't until Earhart attended a stunt flying exhibition, almost a decade later, that she became seriously interested in aviation.

1.2. Teach students about the 3 systems of English

Greek

Technical words:

**New words
through compounding
root words:**
geopolitical

Other Sources: Words
from other languages, proper
names for places and people,
acronyms, & echoic words

Romance

Most literary and academic words

New words through derivations:
frigidity, frigidness, refrigerator

Anglo-Saxon

Common, everyday, down-to-earth words

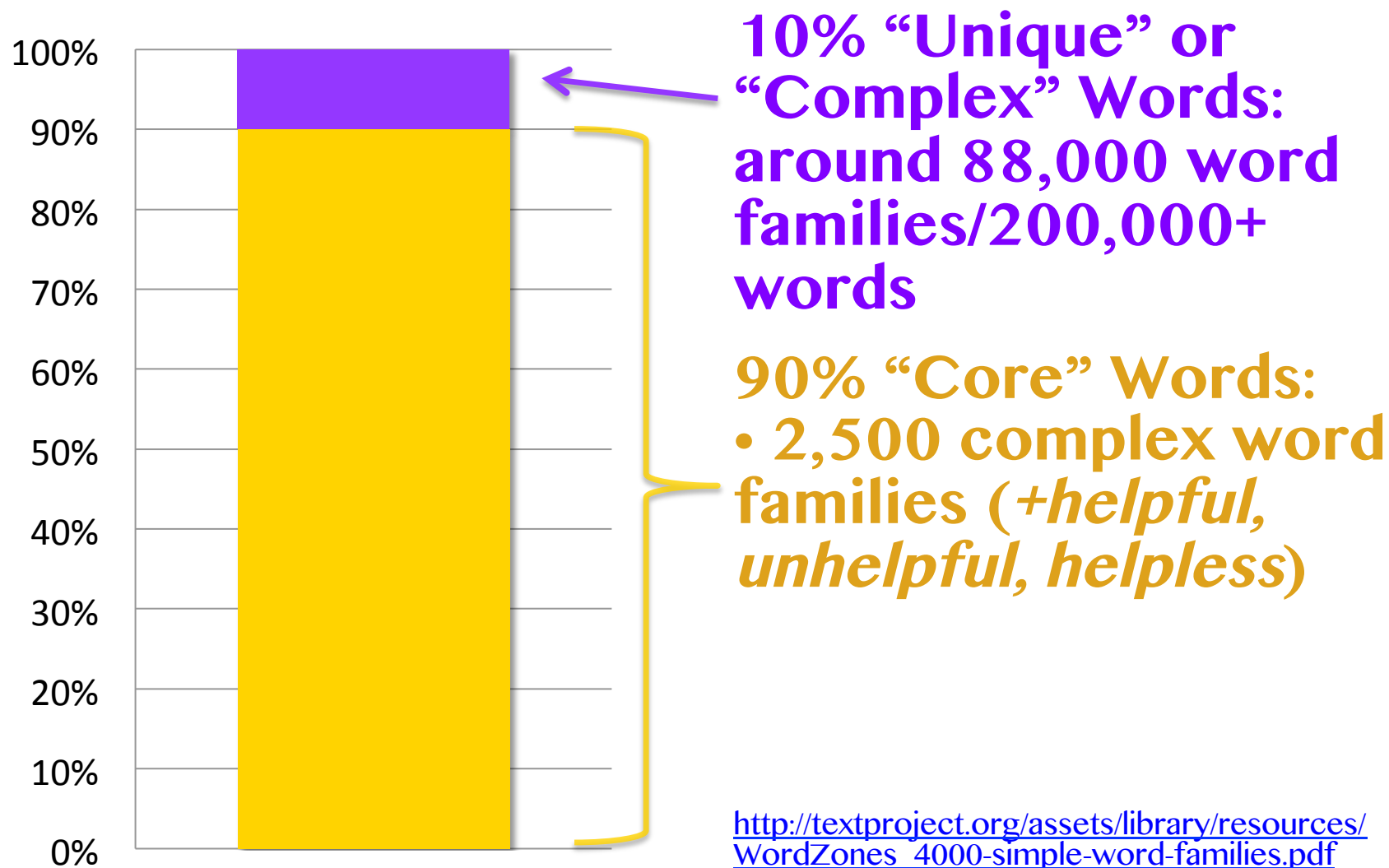
New words through compounding:
cold-blooded, cold-natured, cold-running

Idea	Action	Open-Access Resource
1. English has more words than can be taught.	1. Teach students to expect new words in texts.	1. Talking Points for Teachers: New Words in New Texts
2. A small group of words does the heavy lifting in English.	2. Increase volume of reading	2. •FYI for Kids •ReadWorks.org
3. Rare words in narrative texts belong to synonym networks; those in informational texts in topic networks.	3. Teach students prolific synonym networks & organize topics into networks.	3. •Super Synonym Sets for Stories (S4) •Exceptional Expressions in Everyday Events (E4)
4. Teach vocabulary in the service of developing bodies of knowledge.	4. Develop bodies of knowledge in ELA instruction.	4. •Intentional Read-Aloud Curriculum •ReadWorks Lessons •Word Pictures



Idea 2: A small group of words does the heavy lifting in English.

The distribution of words in written English



Nearly every day last summer my nephew Keith and I went crabbing in a creek on the New Jersey coast. We used a wire trap baited with scraps of fish and meat. Each time a crab entered the trap to eat, we pulled the doors closed. We cooked and ate the crabs we caught.

Blue crabs are very strong. Their big claws can make a painful pinch. When cornered, the crabs boldly defend themselves. They wave their outstretched claws and are fast and ready to fight. Keith and I had to be very careful to avoid having our fingers pinched.

Spider was a hungry one, he always wanted to eat. Everybody in Ashanti knew about his appetite. He was greedy, too, and always wanted more than his share of things. So people steered clear of Spider.

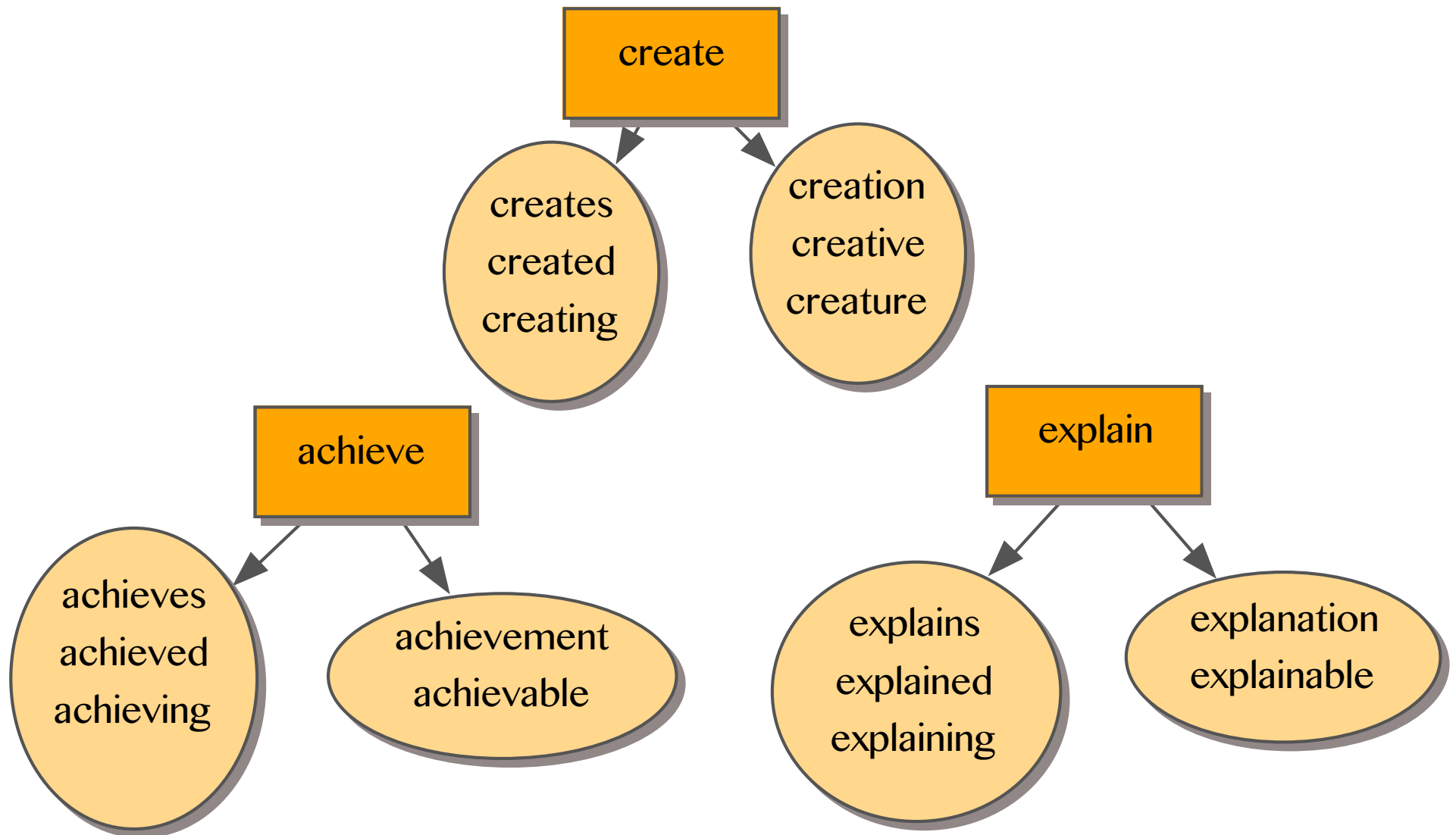
But one day a stranger came to Spider's habitation out in the back country. His name was Turtle. Turtle was a long way from his home. He had been walking all day in the hot sun and he was tired and hungry. So Spider had to invite Turtle into his house and offer him something to eat. He hated to do it.

Examples of the Words in the Core Vocabulary

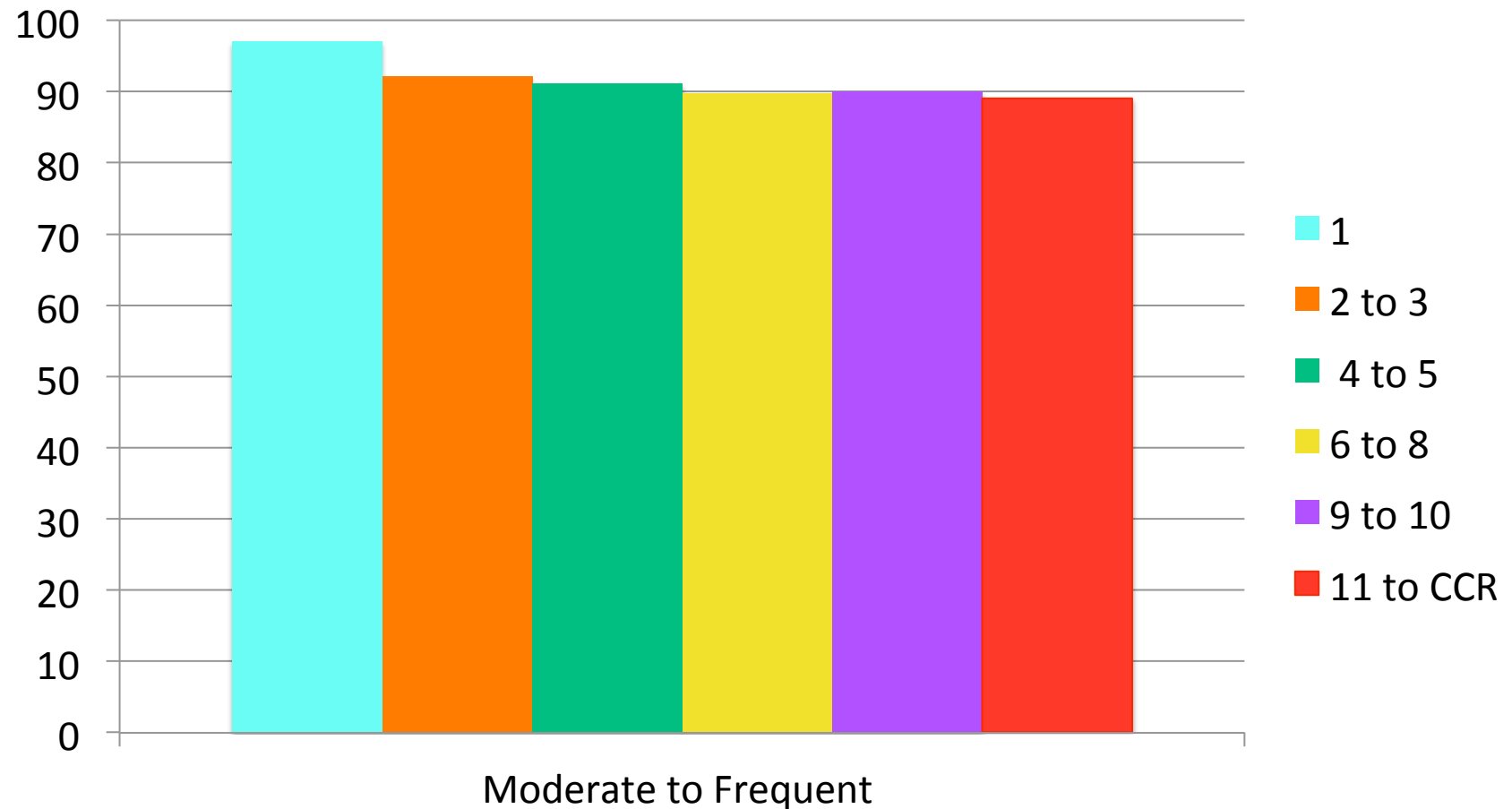
	words
1st 100	the, by, no, through, must
101-300	long, great, put, last, family
301-1,000	power, north, story, strong, answer
1,001-1,500	valley, imagine, motion, nearby, importance
1,501-2,000	character, responsible, design, presence, trail
2001-2,500	mixture, discovery, civilization, attitude, assume

General Academic Vocabulary:

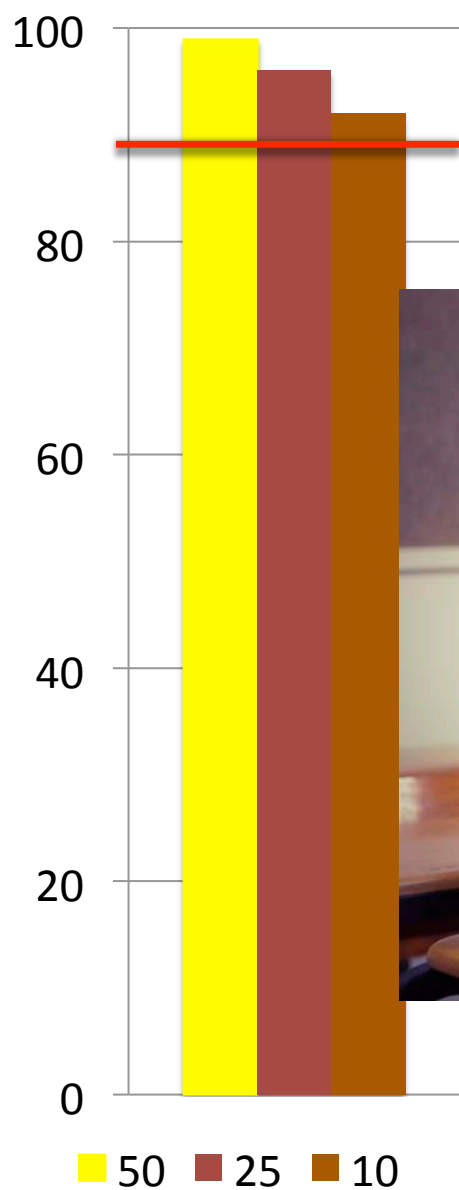
Many of these words are in the 2,500 Morphological Families



Evidence for the presence of the 2,500 word families in texts



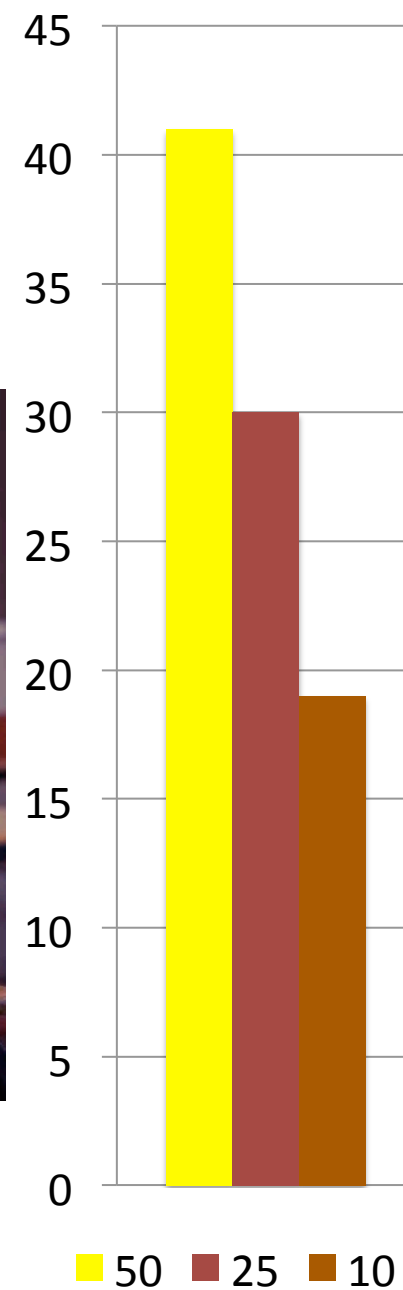
Word Recognition
Accuracy



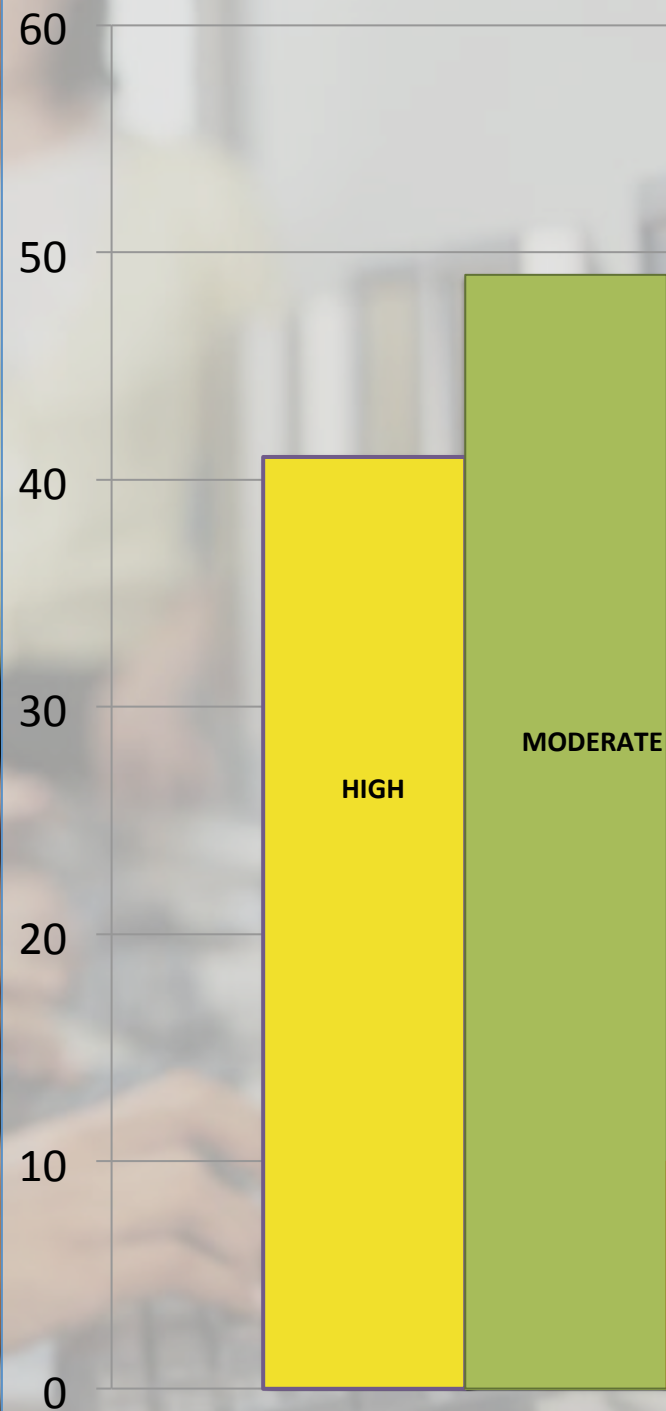
End Grade 3: Oral Reading



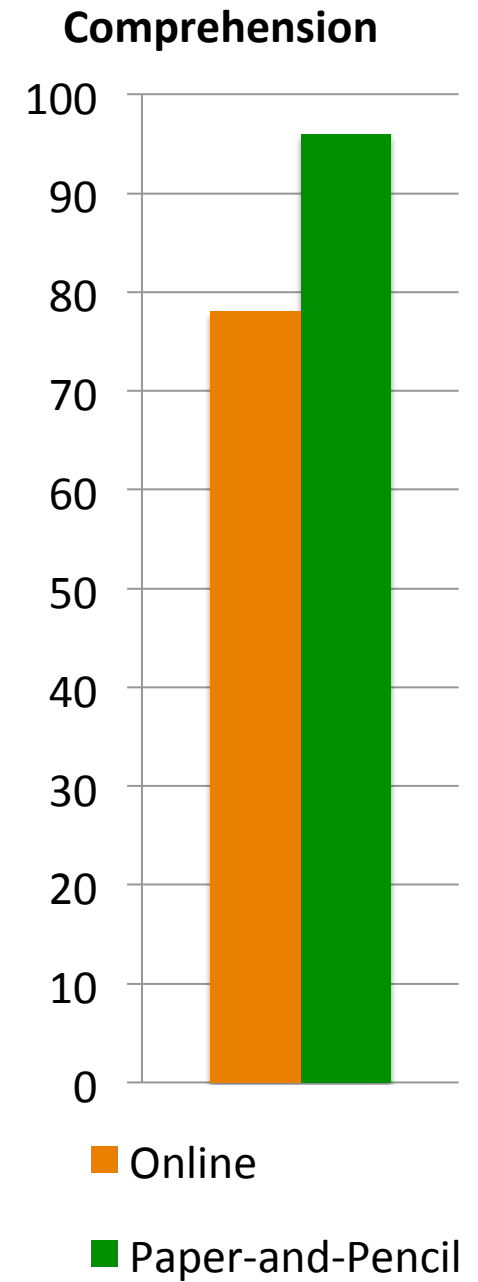
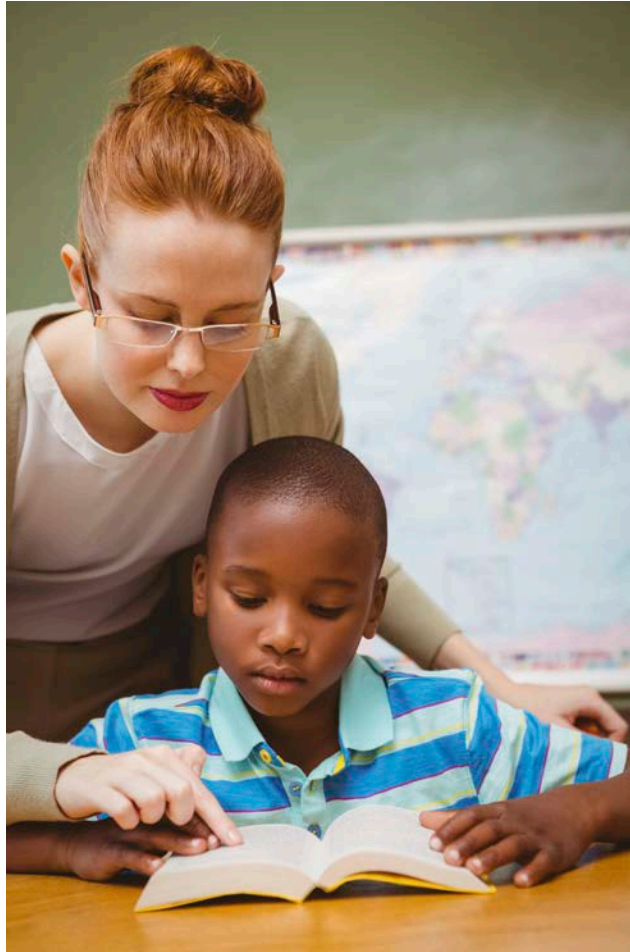
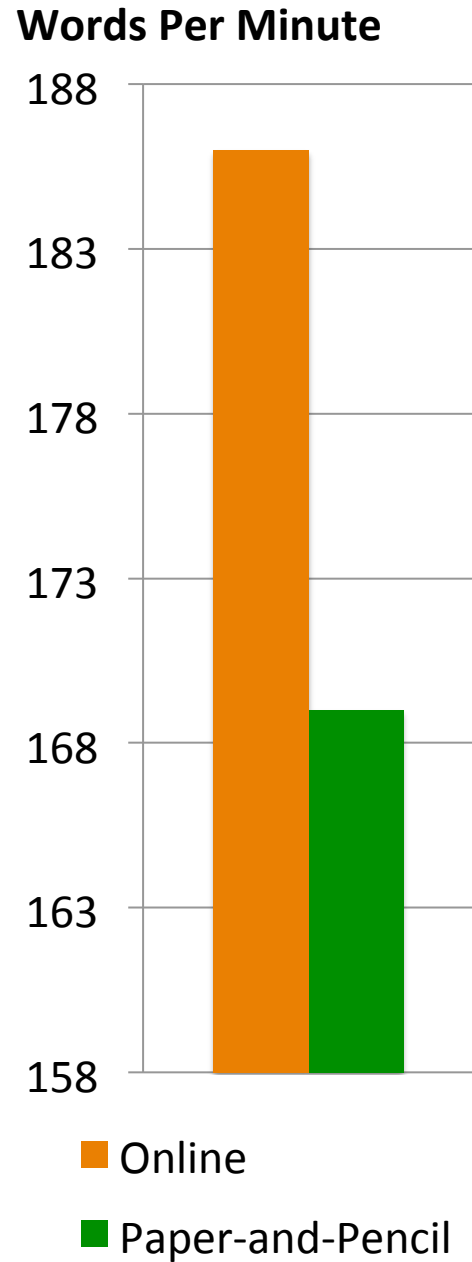
Comprehension



Comprehension of 6th Graders on a Silent Reading Fluency Assessment



Low/Moderate-Low Comprehenders: Silent Reading Tasks

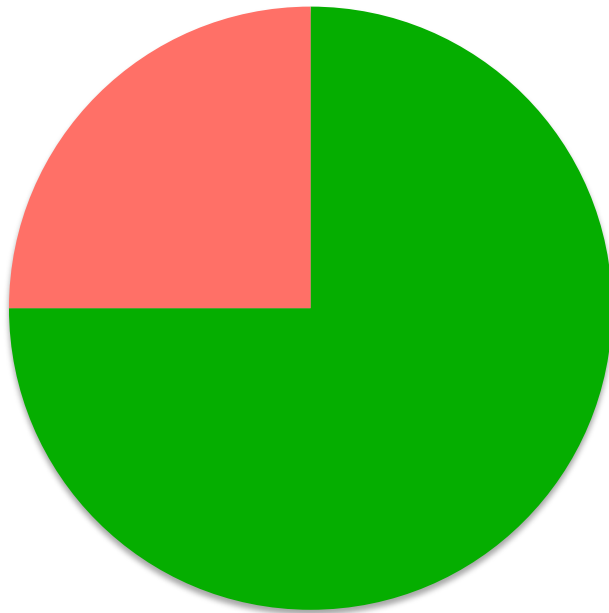




Action 2: INCREASE VOLUME OF READING

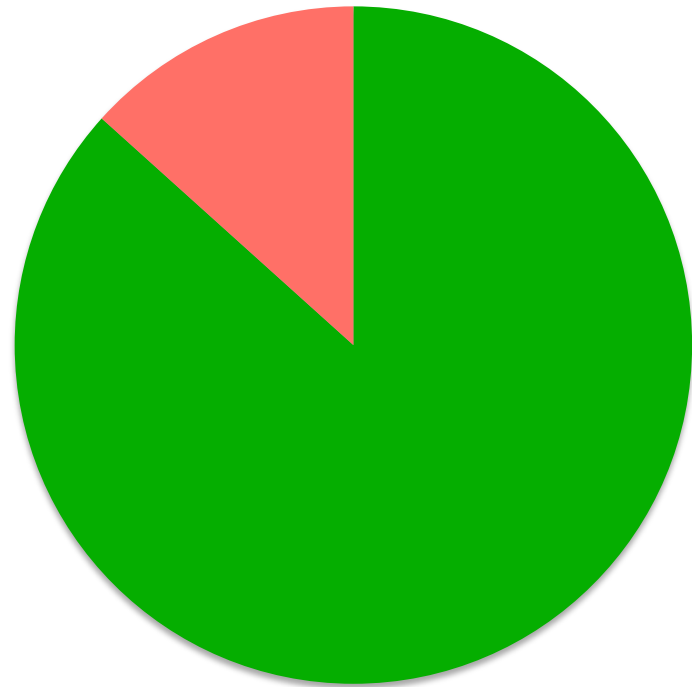
Time Spent in Reading Instruction & “Eyes on Text”

**Reading Instruction
(1970s to late 1980s)**

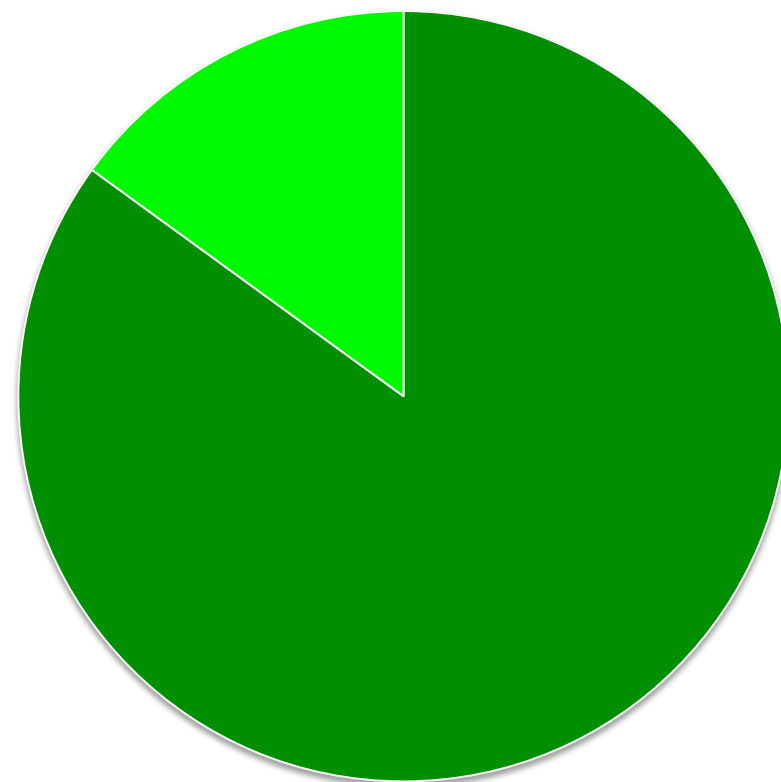


■ Instruction ■ Time Spent reading

Reading Instruction (late 1990s -)

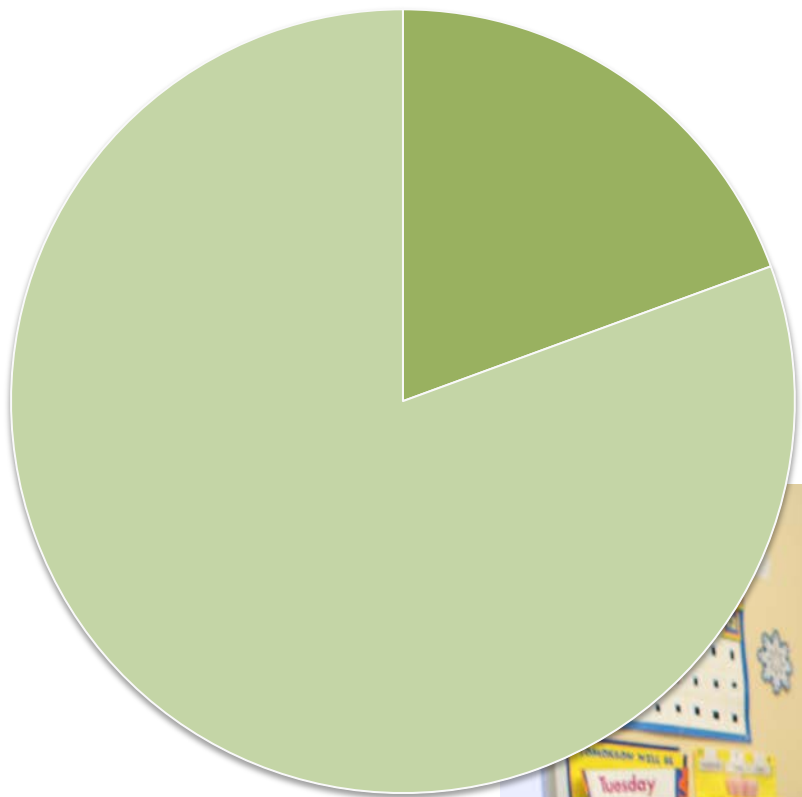


■ Instruction ■ Time Spent reading



■ Other activities ■ Reading

Swanson, Wanzek, McCulley, Stillman-Spisask, Vaughn, Simmons, Fogarty, & Hairrell, 2015.



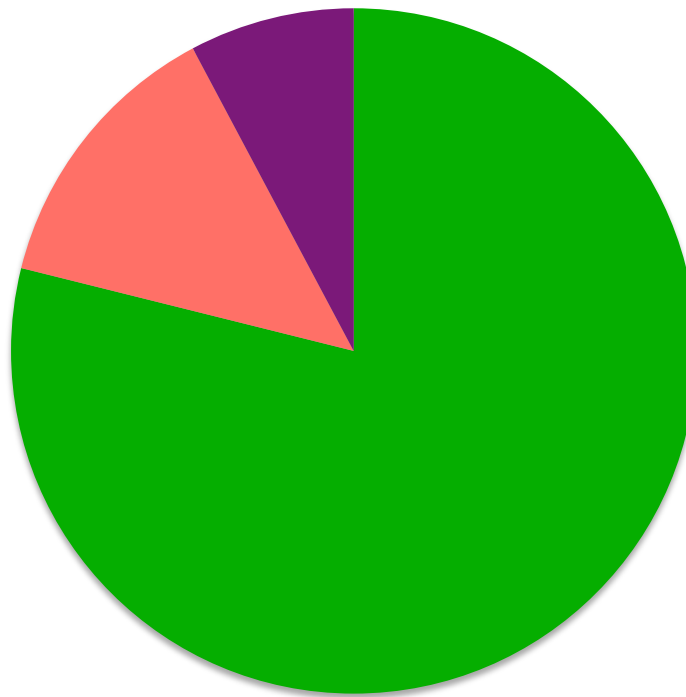
■ Silent Reading

■ Listening, Following Along to Oral Reading



2.1 7 Minutes of Additional Reading

**Reading Instruction
(w/ 7 additional minutes)**



■ Instruction ■ Time Spent reading ■ Additional 7 minutes

2.2. Have Students set Goals

Goal: Increase amount of reading each trimester of the school year.

Step 1: Get baseline data:

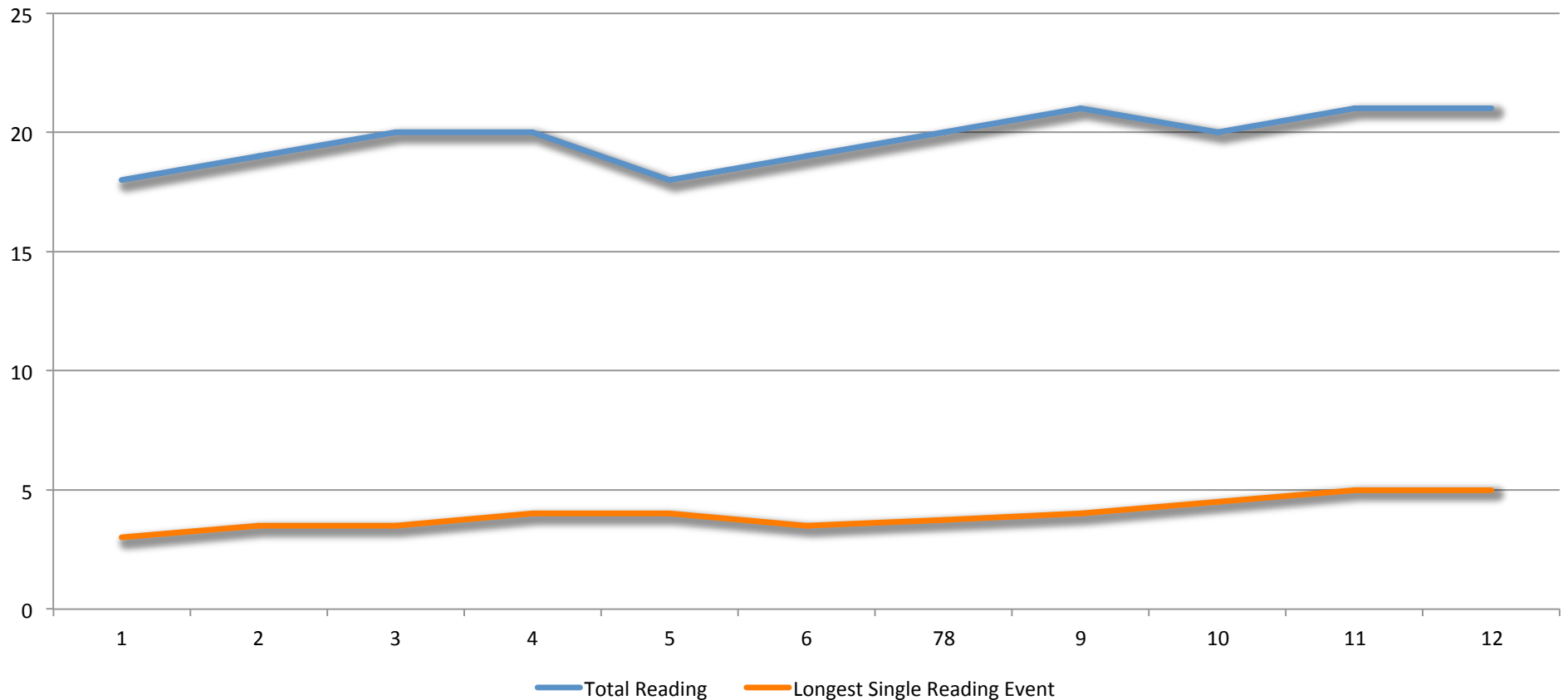
- Establish length of time spent reading
- Establish length of typical reading event

Step 2: Set the goal (students in charge in Grades 3+; students guided in Grades 2-)

Example: Goal for trimester: 22 min.
daily, with at least one event for 5 min.

Step 3: *Always* keep a record of what you've learned from reading

Illustration of Student Goal Setting:



Record of what I learned from reading:

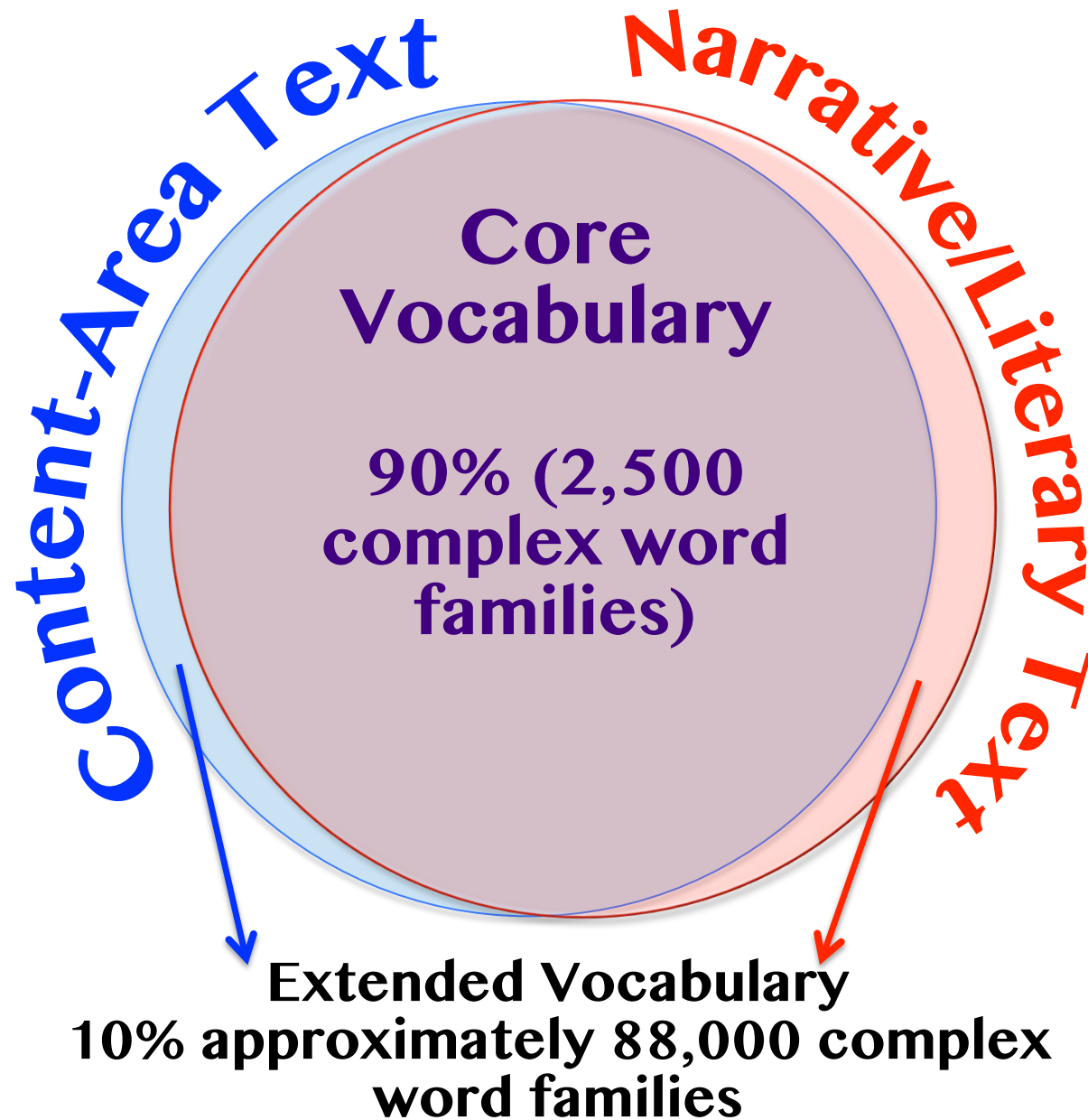
- Fibonacci patterns (I read *Blockhead; Patterns of Nature*):
- Musicians (*John's Secret Dreams; Lives of the Musicians*): Some people like John Lennon use music to deal with hard things in their lives. Often, musicians need to make many sacrifices to do what they do.

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**Idea 3: Rare words are
part of networks**

The Other 10%: Rare Words in Writing



Narrative Text

Even with eyes protected by the green spectacles, Dorothy and her friends were at first dazzled by the brilliancy of the wonderful City. The streets were lined with beautiful houses all built of green marble and studded everywhere with sparkling emeralds. They walked over a pavement of the same green marble, and where the blocks were joined together were rows of emeralds, set closely, and glittering in the brightness of the sun. The window panes were of green glass; even the sky above the City had a green tint, and the rays of the sun were green.

From *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* Frank Baum)

**(a)
Networks
in
narratives
are
synonyms
related to
story
elements.**

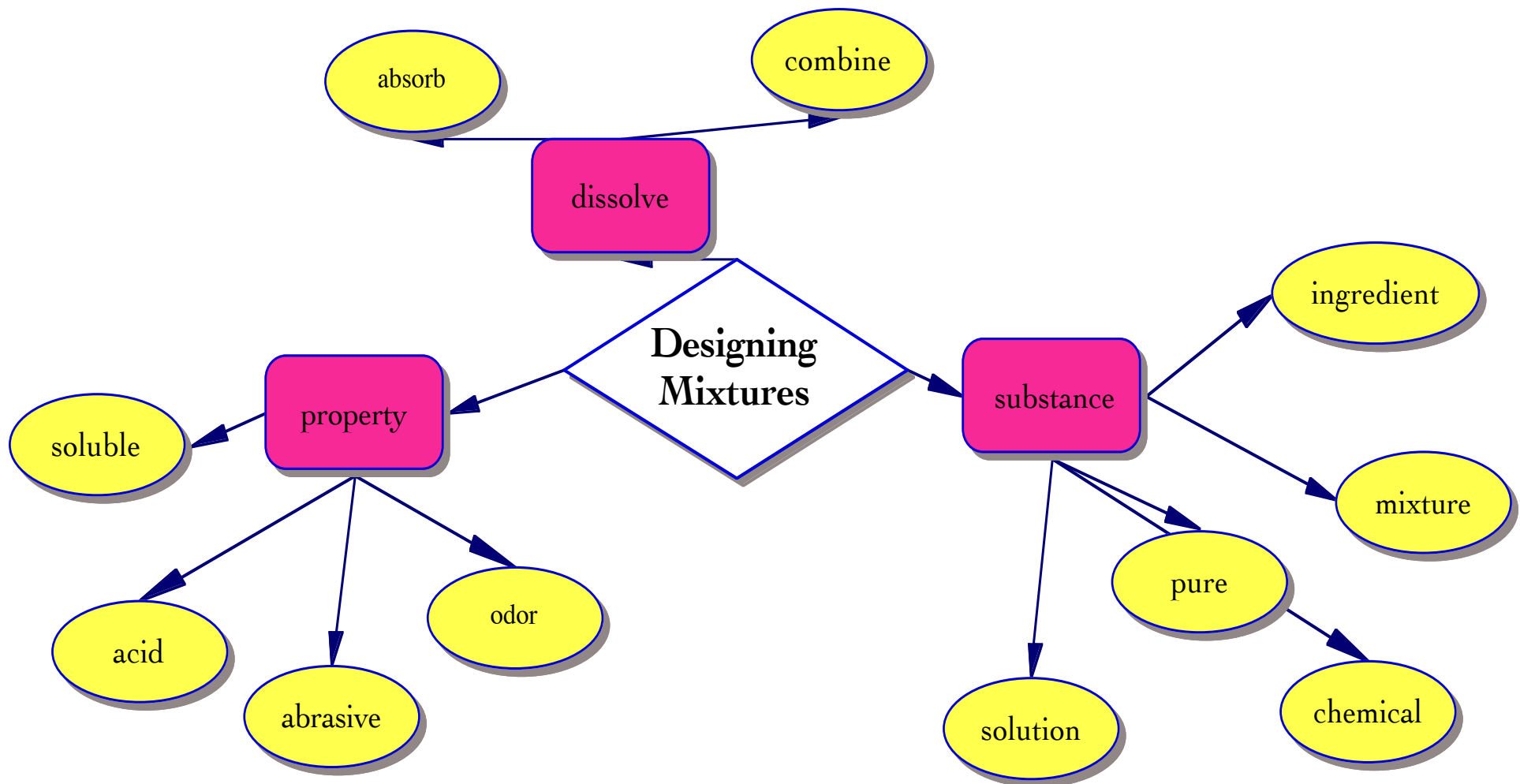
Story Word	Other Possibilities
dazzled	hypnotized awed
brilliancy	effulgence luminosity
glittering	shimmering radiance

(b) The rare words in
informational texts
belong to topical
networks.

Informational Text

A simple solution is basically two substances that are evenly mixed together. One of them is called the **solute** and the other is the **solvent**. A solute is the substance to be dissolved (sugar). The **solvent** is the one doing the dissolving (water). As a rule of thumb, there is usually more **solvent** than **solute**. The amount of **solute** that can be dissolved by the **solvent** is defined as **solubility**.

An Example of a Topical Network



A close-up photograph of a young child's face, focusing on the eyes and nose. The child has light blonde hair and blue eyes. The background is blurred, showing some greenery and a blue object. A semi-transparent yellow box is overlaid on the upper part of the image, containing the text.

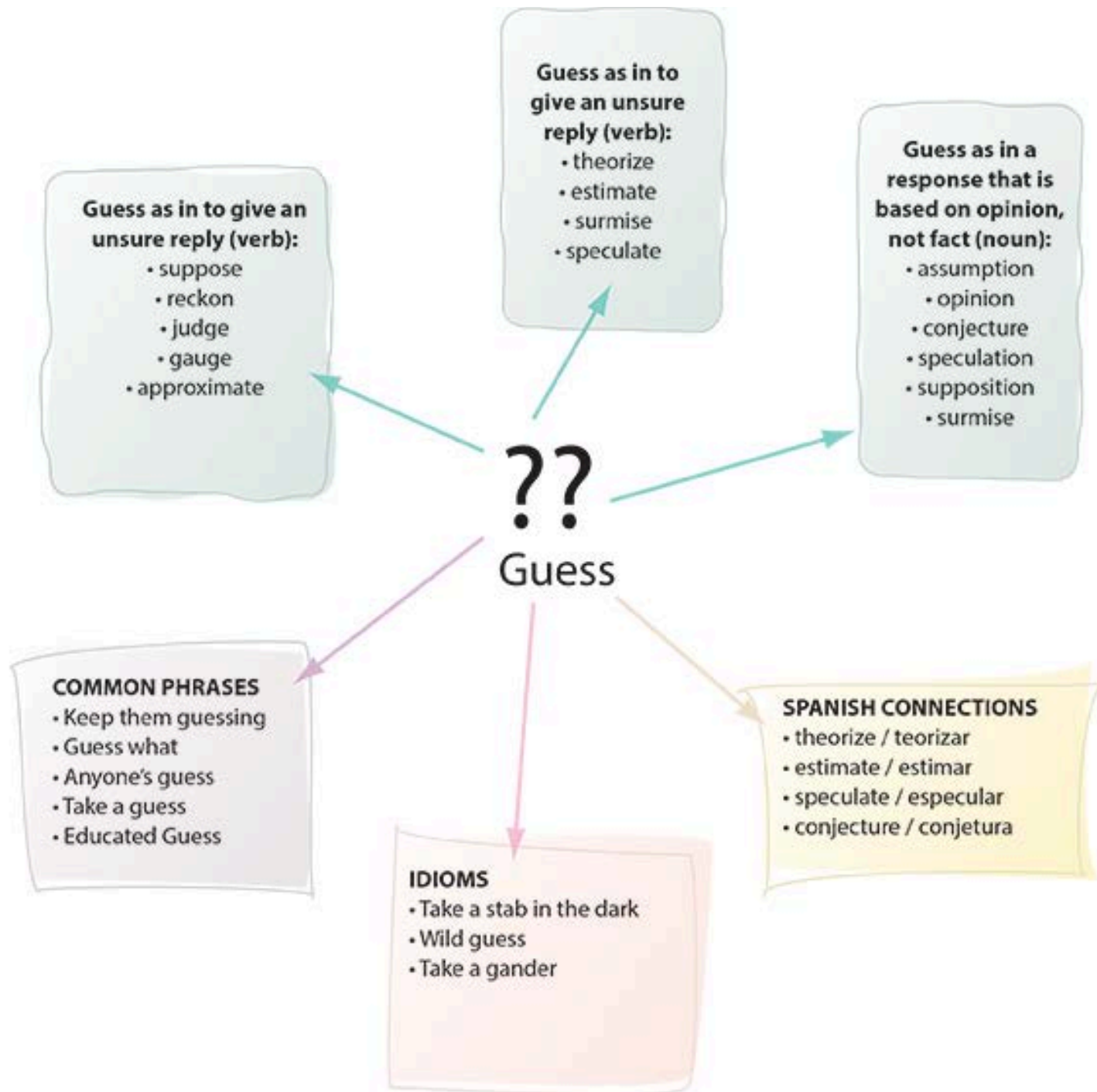
**Action 3a: TEACH
STUDENTS PROLIFIC
SYNONYM NETWORKS**



Synonym Networks in Narrative Texts

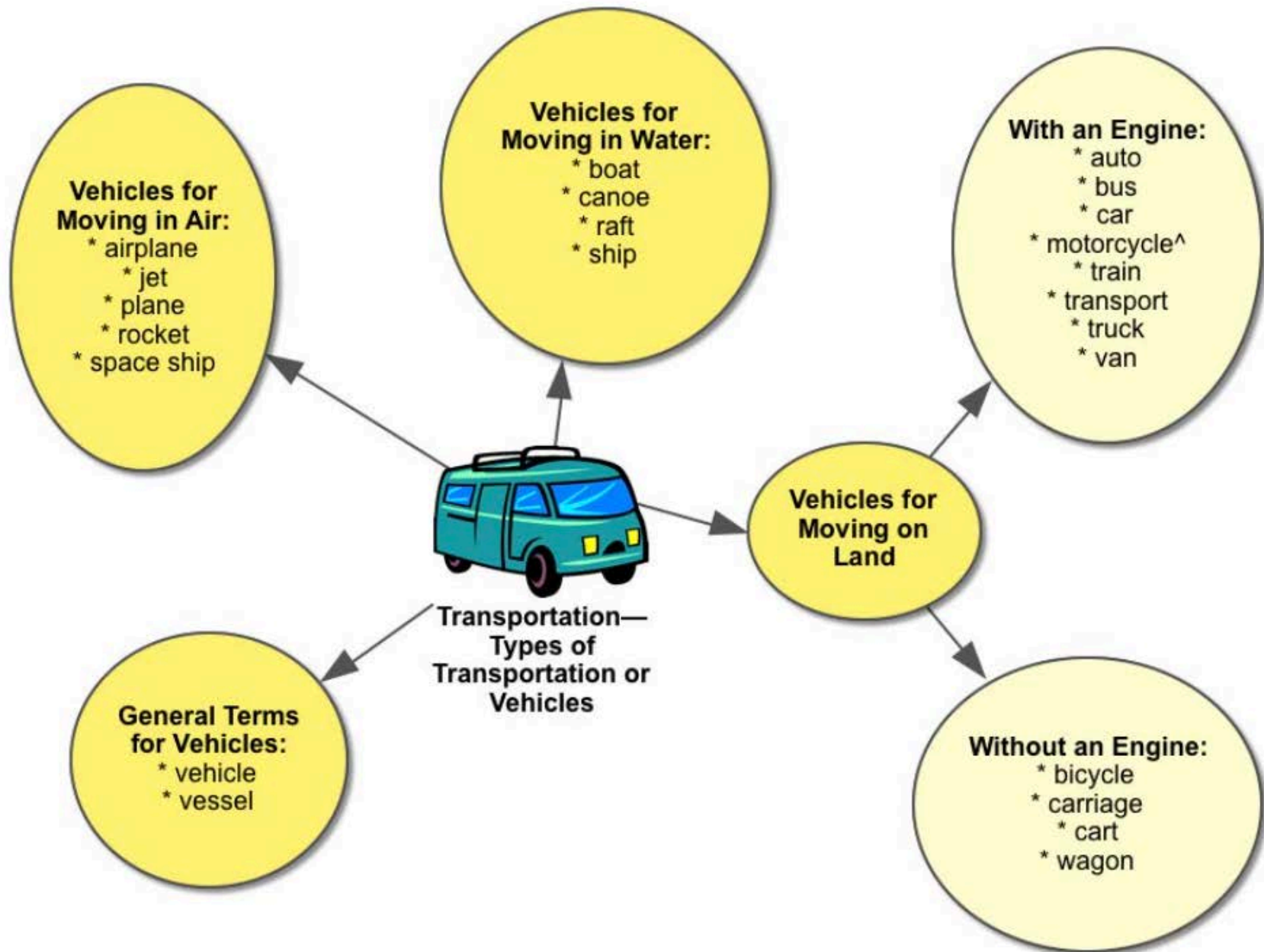
Prolific Groups of Synonyms

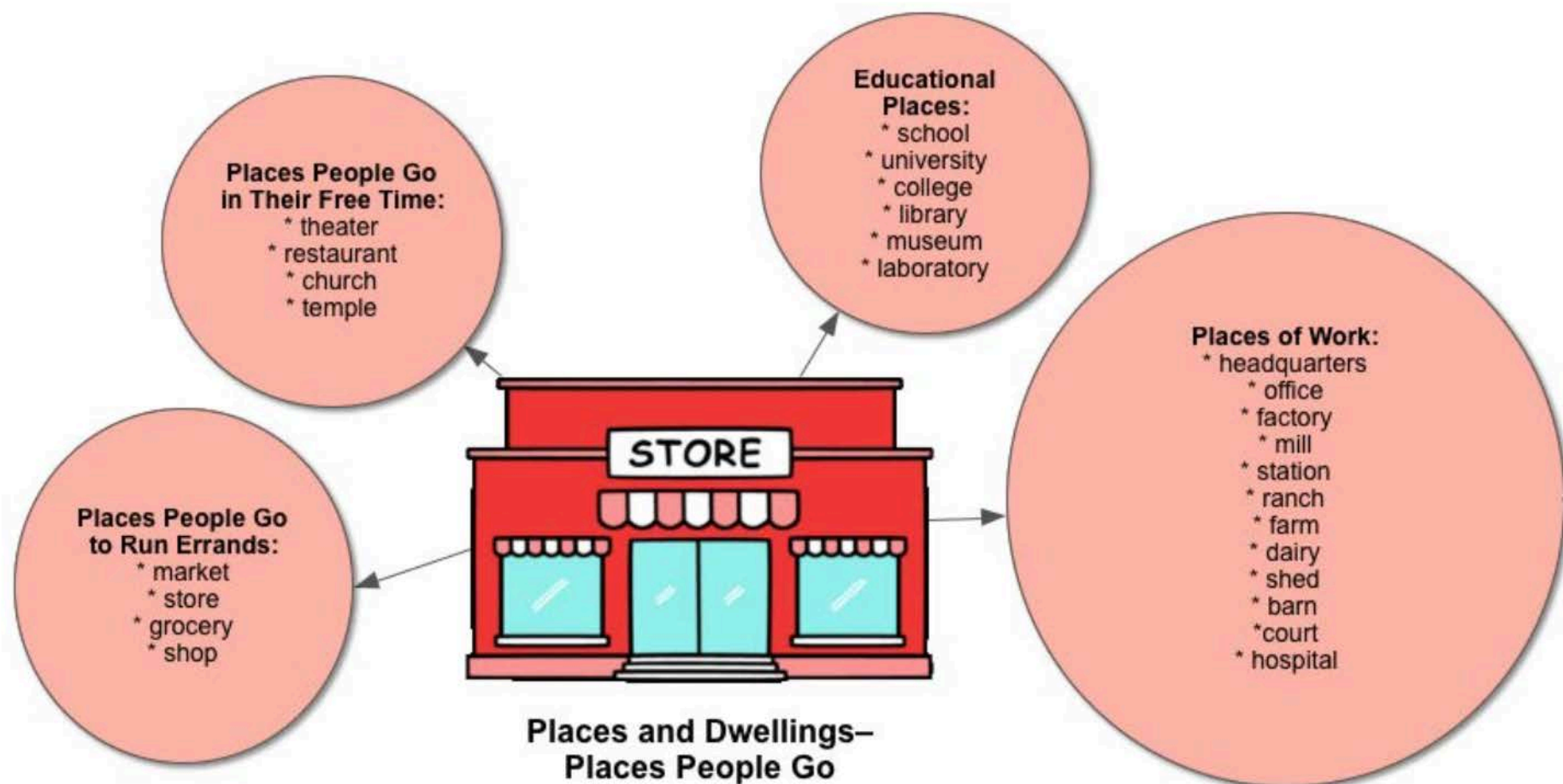
Communication /Internal Processes (verbs)	Emotions (adjectives)	Movement (verbs)	Traits (adjectives)
think	happy	go	funny
argue	sad	send	smart
look	mad	start	brave
guess	hope	stop	selfish
said	fear	stay	shy

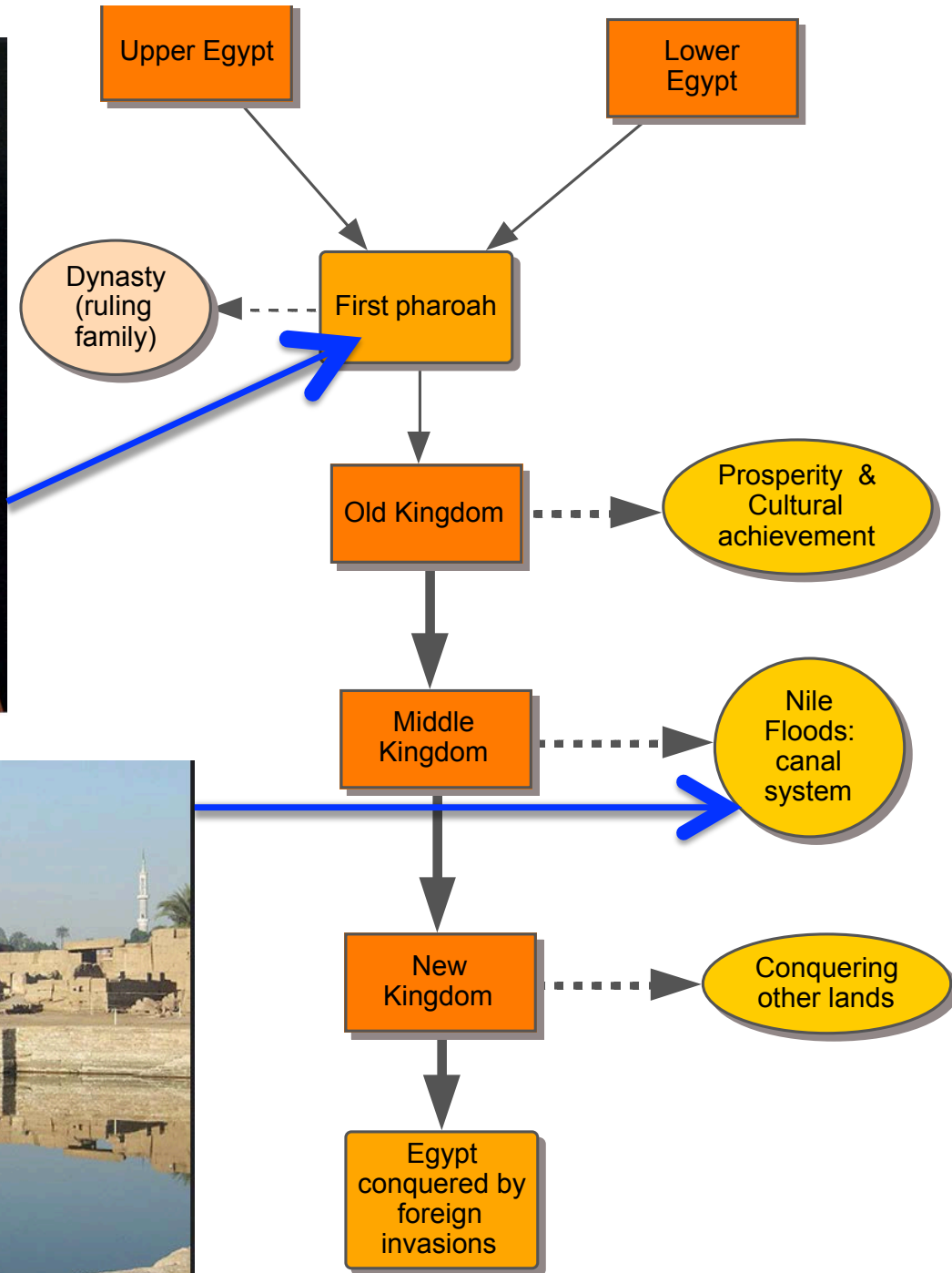


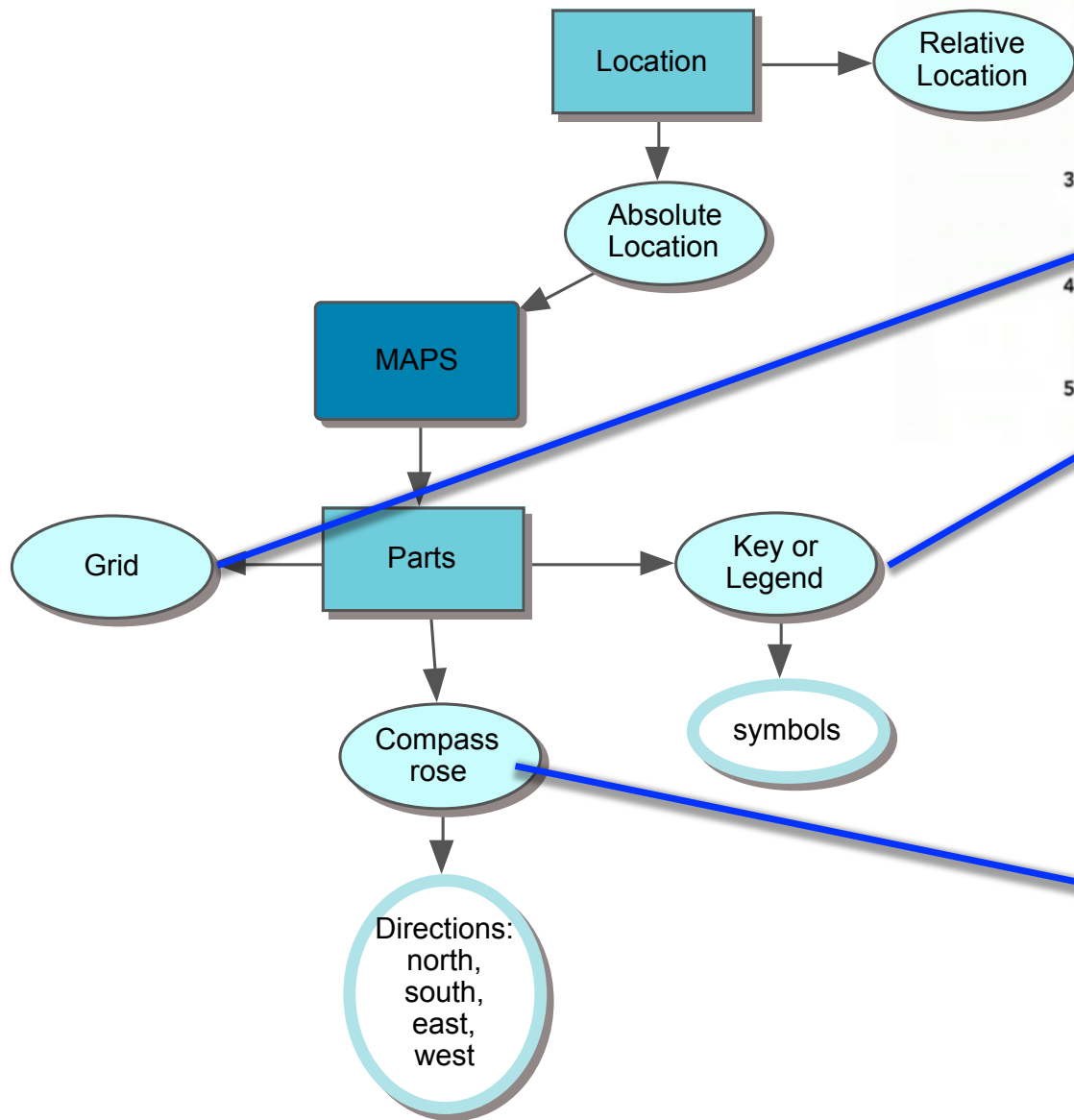


ACTION 3b. Teach students to organize rare words in informational texts into topical networks.









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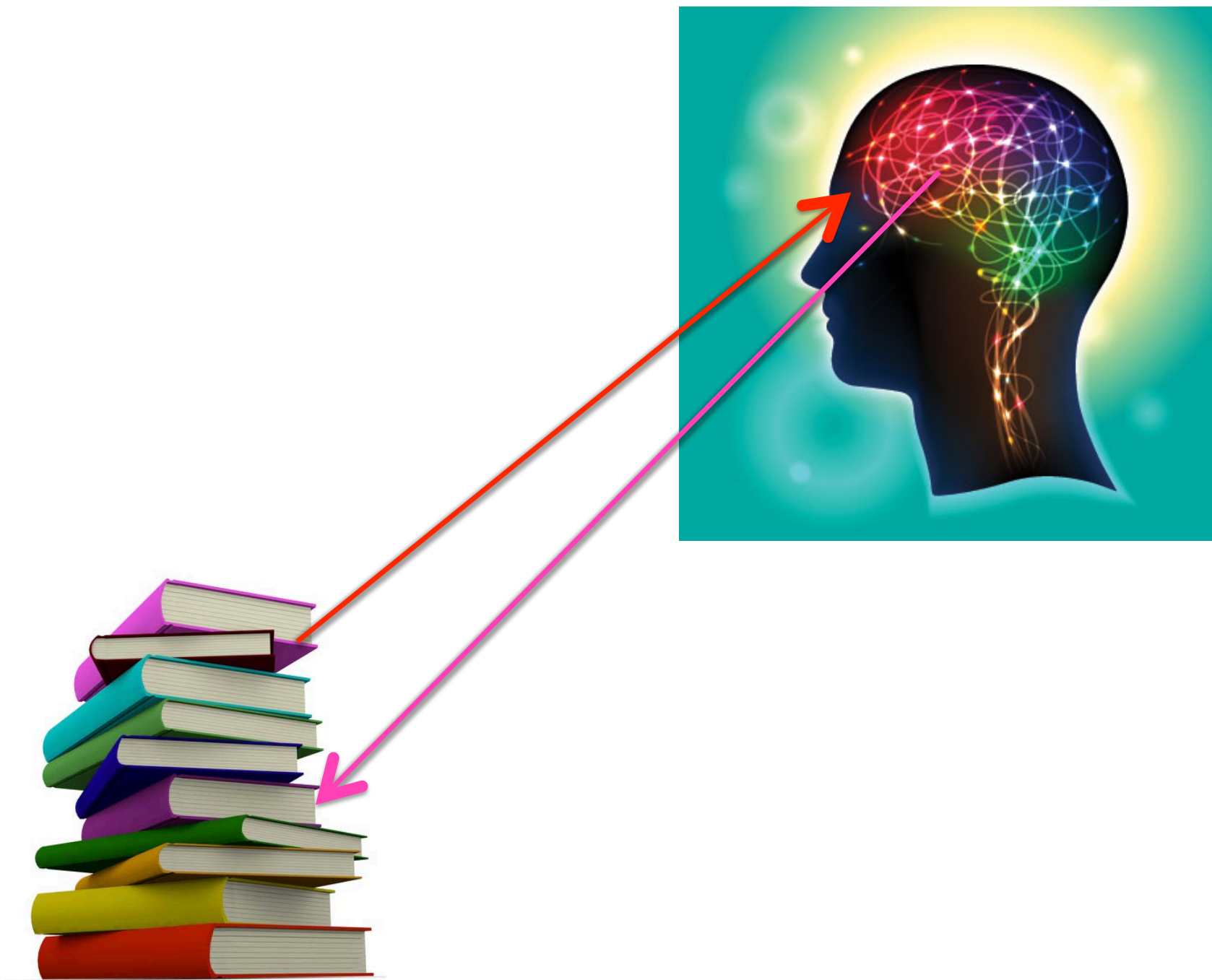


**Idea 4: Teach
vocabulary in
the service of
developing
bodies of
knowledge.**

Correlation between Background Knowledge & Comprehension = .94

Reading for Understanding Network Study of Comprehension in Grades
7-12

Slide is from the presentation of David Francis (April 19, 2013). CCSS Assessments and Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners. Plenary session at Institute on Assessment in the Era of the Common Core State Standards, International Reading Association.



Deep
knowledge
of some
topics



Broad knowledge of many topics



He was the largest trout I had ever caught and the most beautiful thing I had ever seen, silver and sleek and pretty as a rainbow, and I could hardly wait to take him home to Granddaddy.



We are
Americans!"
Miguel pipes up.
He wonders what
makes him a real
American.
Because he was
born in New York
unlike his parents,
who were both
born in the
Dominican
Republic? Because
he speaks English?
Because his
favorite baseball
team is the
Yankees?



Before letting her go, scientists attached a special pop-up satellite tag to the white shark. A month later the tag automatically popped off the shark, floated to the surface, and sent data to an orbiting satellite.

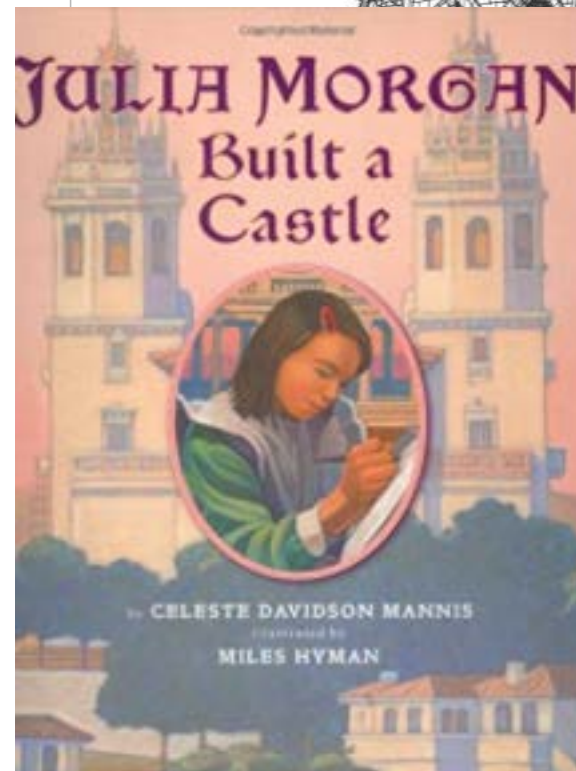
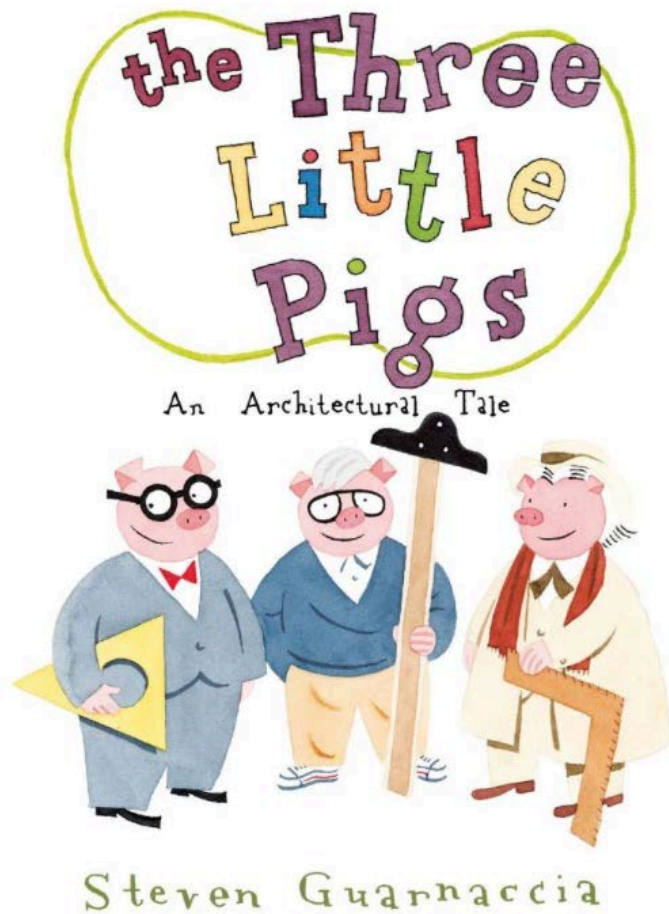


A stylized illustration of a neural network. It features several glowing blue neurons with prominent cell bodies and a dense web of branching axons. Bright orange-red points of light are scattered throughout, representing synaptic connections or electrical impulses. The background is dark, making the glowing elements stand out.

Action 4: Develop bodies of
knowledge in English/Language
Arts instruction

4.1. Connect read-alouds, reading selections, independent reading, % vocabulary

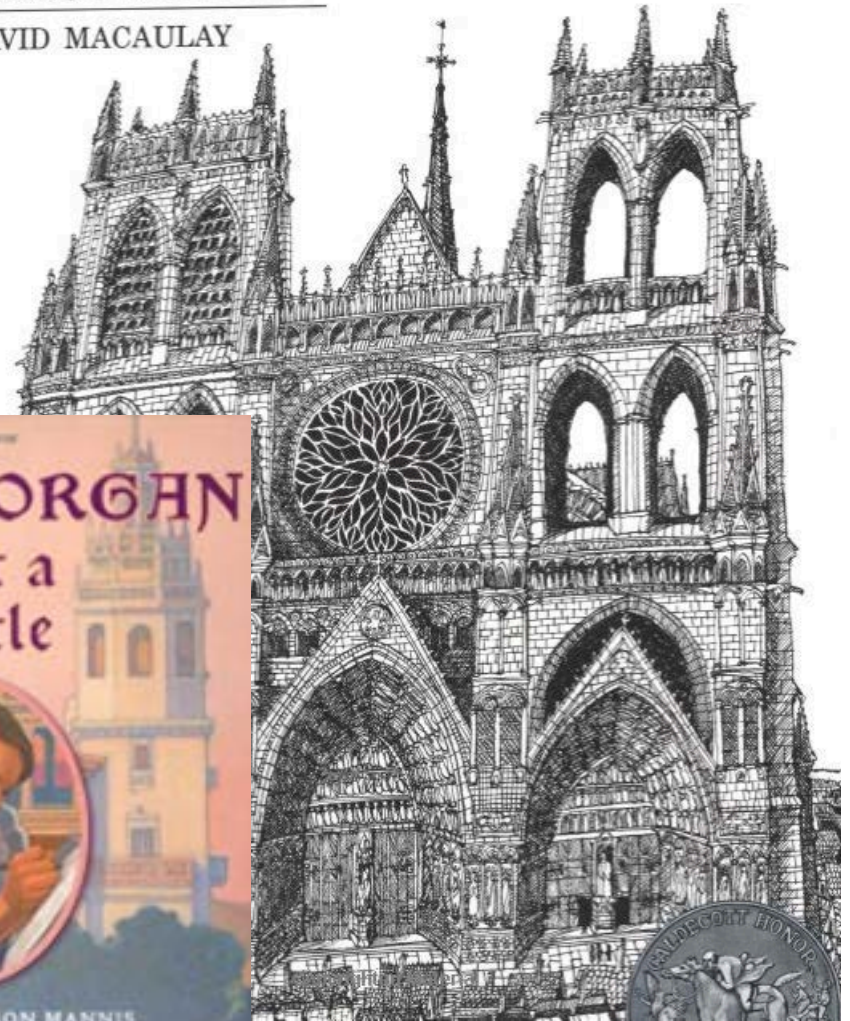
Read-Alouds



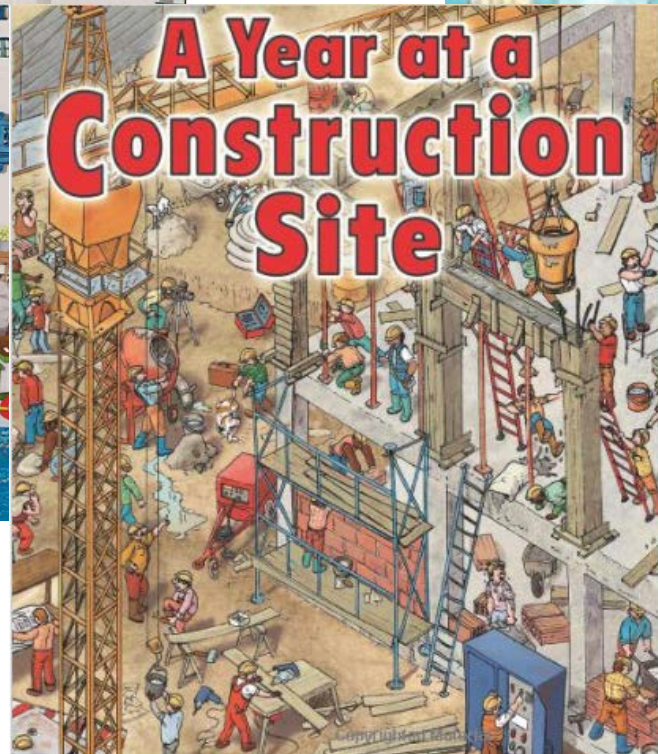
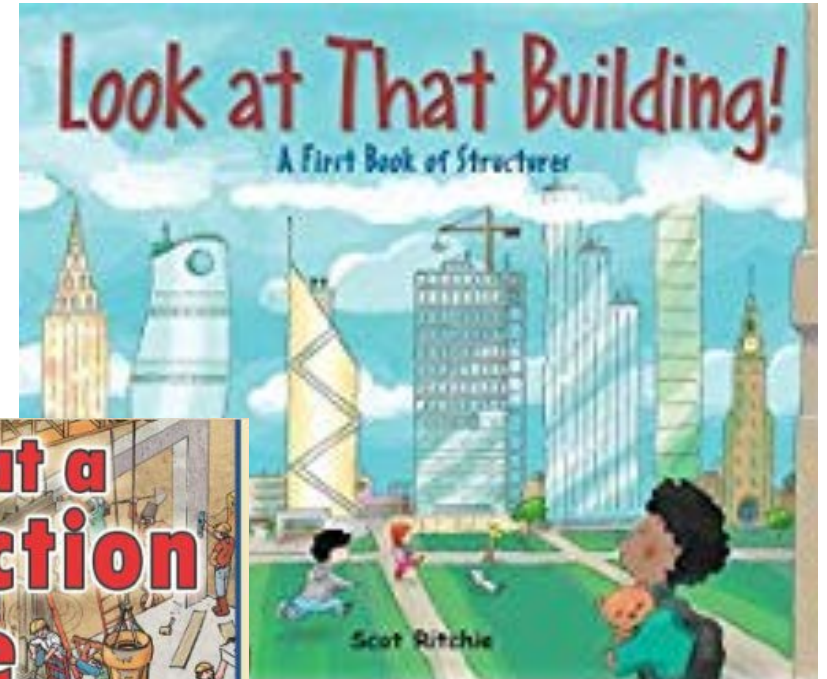
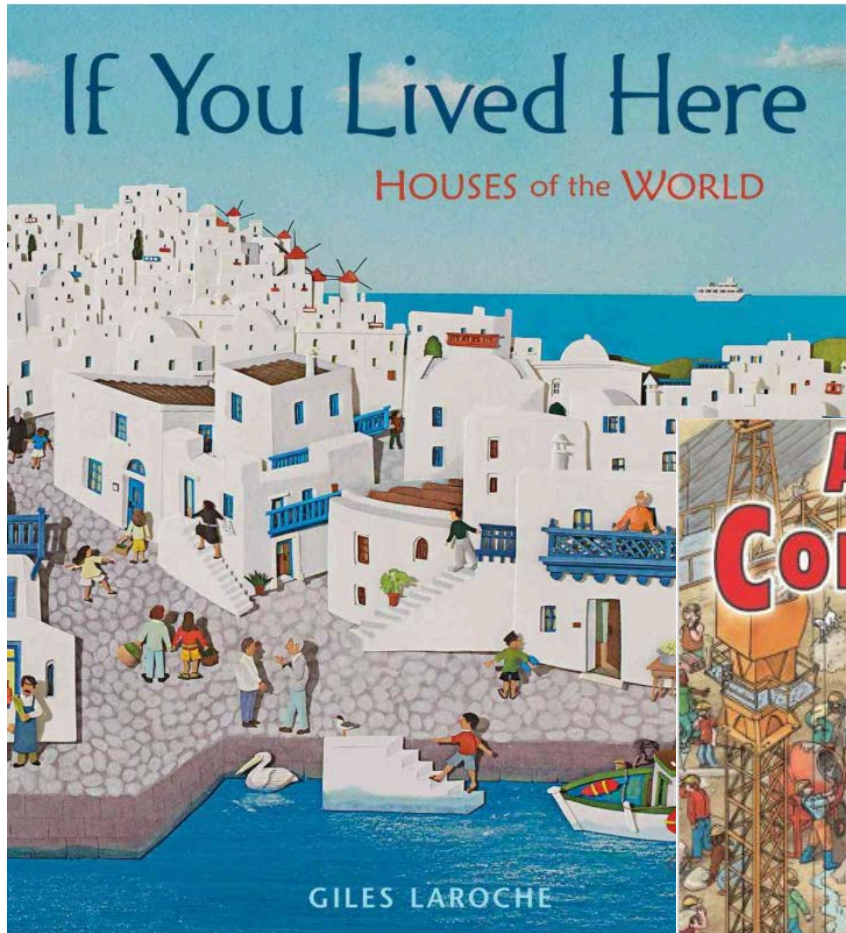
CATHEDRAL

The Story of Its Construction

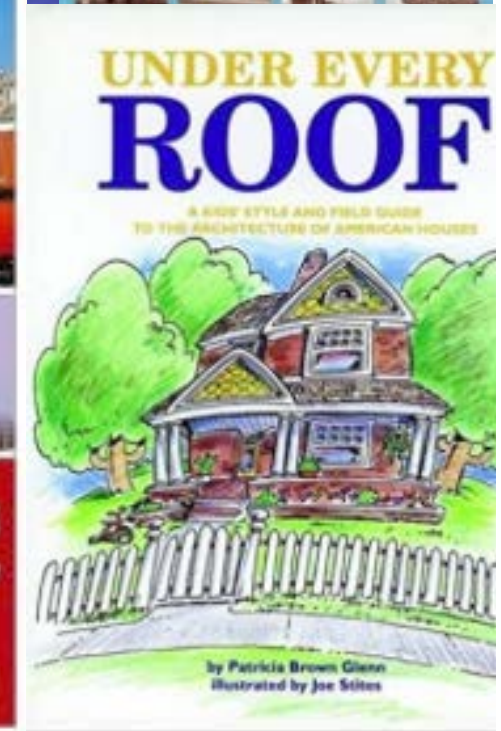
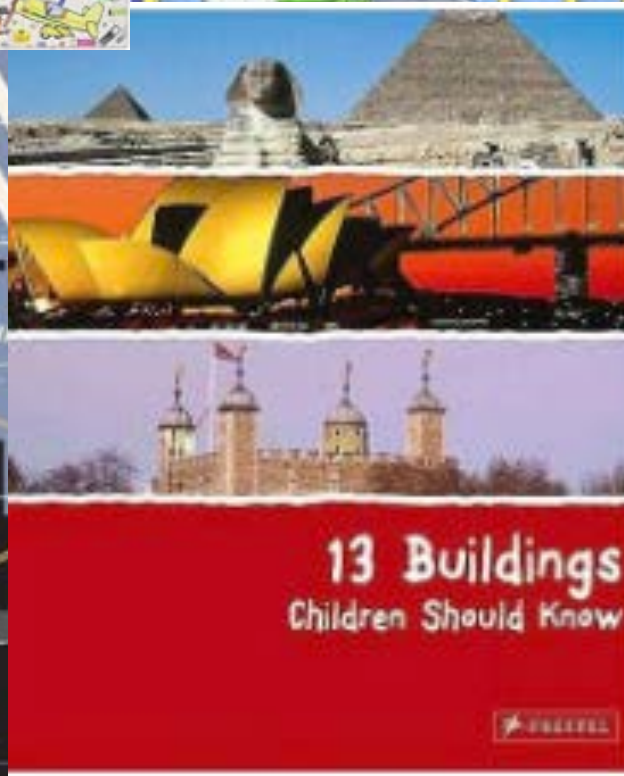
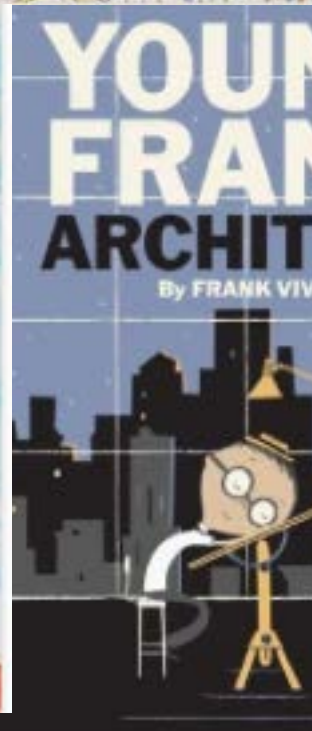
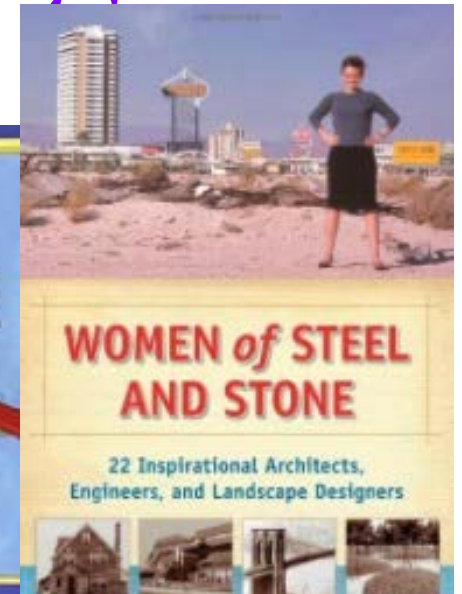
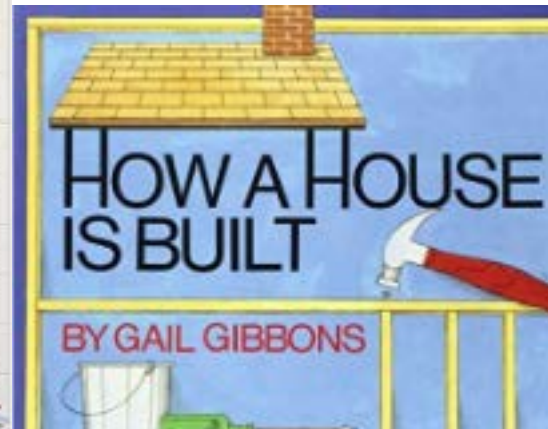
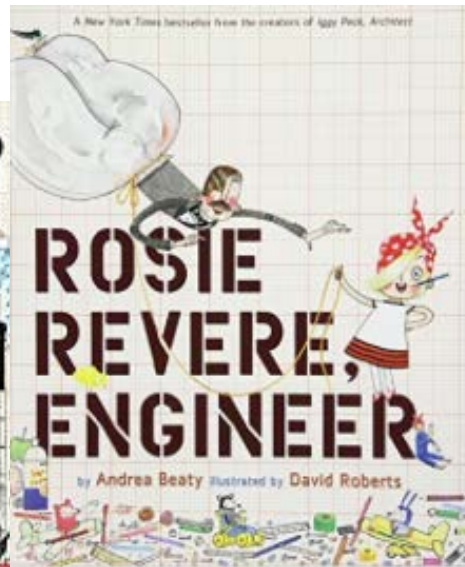
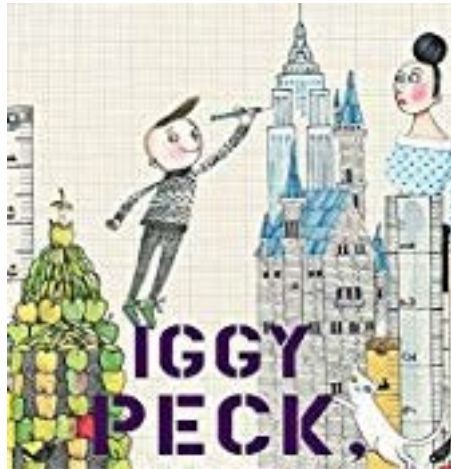
DAVID MACAULAY



Instructional Texts



Independent Reading



Vocabulary



cottage

(cot·tage)



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apartment

(apart·ment)



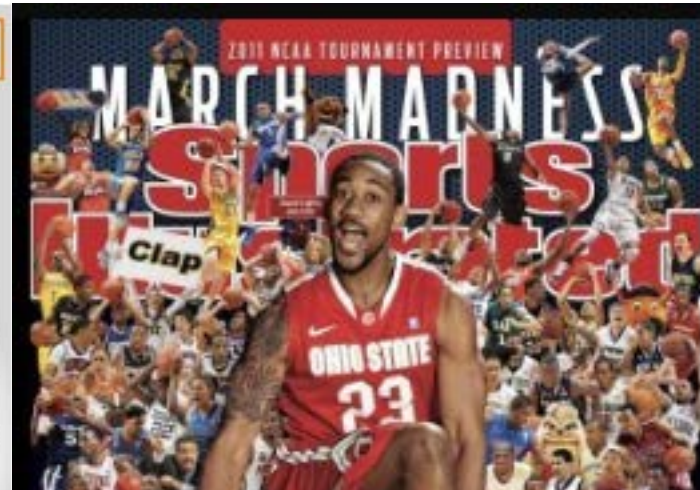
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estate

(es·tate)



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4.2. Engage students in magazine articles



Kites: Dancers in the Wind

volume 3
issue 15



You're on a beach, and the wind is blowing off the ocean. Your kite floats and swirls, dancing in the wind.

Kites were invented in China more than 2,000 years ago. They were first used by the Chinese military, but about 1,000 years ago, people started flying kites for fun. Since then, kites have been used for celebrations, in competitions, and

for science. In addition, kite festivals show off the many shapes and colors of kites. These festivals are held in Japan, Pakistan, and many other countries.

The first kites were made of silk. After paper was invented, around the year 100 AD, people used it to make kites. Today, most kites are made of paper or cloth, with sticks to hold them in shape and string to hold onto them. However, there are also kites for skiing or for moving a buggy on a beach.

In ancient times, kites carried lines across rivers. These lines helped build bridges. In the 1880s, kites

were first used to take photographs. In the early 1900s, the United States Weather Bureau used kites to help with weather prediction. The kites measured winds and temperatures.

The word kite is from an Old English word that means "a kind of hawk." Kites were probably given this name because of the way they look when they fly.

To fly a kite, find a large open area, such as a park or a beach. Make sure there are no trees or power lines the kite can get caught on. Then hold the kite's string up and run. The kite will lift when it catches the wind. Guide your kite by pulling the string. Make sure you look around when you're running so you don't run into anything.

As you watch the kite, notice how it moves. If the wind is just right, your kite will dance, too, swirling as the wind takes it high up into the sky.



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Putting Two Words Together

volume 3
issue 2



A lot of sports that people play use balls. In basketball, players try to get a ball through a hoop. In baseball, players use a bat to hit a ball. In football, players throw a ball to get it close to the goal.

There are other words with “ball” that describe things that are round. But they are not balls with which you play a game. Meatballs are not used in any sport. But

they are great with spaghetti.

Eyeballs help in playing sports. But there isn’t a sport called eyeball where teams throw and catch eyeballs. You wouldn’t want to be in a game that uses fireballs. If you would ever see a fireball, you should get as far away as fast as you can. Then call 911 right away. You should also watch out if a cannonball is going to be fired. It is round but you don’t want to play with a cannonball. You especially do not want to catch a cannonball!

There are some words, though, that have ball in them but it has nothing to do with round. Ballpoint pens make

writing a lot easier. It’s easy to see how the “point” got into ballpoint pen. But why the ball? That part is in the name because of the tip of a pen is round. There are also rooms that are called ballrooms. People hold balls in ballrooms but they aren’t the round kind.

Other words with ball have nothing to do with round. In these words, the “ball” part of the word is not even said the same as ball in baseball or meatball. Ballerina is not ball with “erina.” Ballerinas are dancers and the word has nothing to do with ball. A ballot is used by people to vote but it is not round. You don’t even say “ball” when you say the word ballot.

Whenever you see ball as part of a word, look carefully. Usually, the word has something to do with games and sports. But remember eyeballs, fireballs, and cannonballs. These balls may be round but they aren’t used in sports! Ballerina and ballot show that some words with “ball” have nothing to do with being round.



For more information about TextProject and *FYI for Kids*, visit textproject.org
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Putting Two Words Together

volume 3
issue 2



A lot of sports that people play use balls. In basketball, players try to get a ball through a **hoop**. In baseball, players use a bat to hit a ball. In football, players throw a ball to get it close to the goal.

There are other words with “ball” that describe things that are round. But they are not balls with which you play a game. Meatballs are not used in any sport. But

they are great with **spaghetti**.

Eyeballs help in playing sports. But there isn’t a sport called eyeball where teams throw and catch eyeballs. You wouldn’t want to be in a game that uses fireballs. If you would ever see a fireball, you should get as far away as fast as you can. Then call 911 right away. You should also watch out if a cannonball is going to be fired. It is round but you don’t want to play with a cannonball. You especially do not want to catch a cannonball!

There are some words, though, that have ball in them but it has nothing to do with round. Ballpoint pens make

writing a lot easier. It’s easy to see how the “point” got into ballpoint pen. But why the ball? That part is in the name because of the tip of a pen is round. There are also rooms that are called ballrooms. People hold balls in ballrooms but they aren’t the round kind.

Other words with ball have nothing to do with round. In these words, the “ball” part of the word is not even said the same as ball in baseball or meatball. **Ballerina** is not ball with “erina.” Ballerinas are dancers and the word has nothing to do with ball. A **ballot** is used by people to vote but it is not round. You don’t even say “ball” when you say the word ballot.

Whenever you see ball as part of a word, look carefully. Usually, the word has something to do with games and sports. But remember eyeballs, fireballs, and **cannonballs**. These balls may be round but they aren’t used in sports! Ballerina and ballot show that some words with “ball” have nothing to do with being round.



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A Birthday Wish: Rachel Beckwith

volume 5
issue 1



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In the summer of 2011, Rachel Beckwith had just finished third grade. She was looking forward to riding her bike and playing games like jump rope with her friends. Rachel also liked dancing.

Then she heard someone say that there were children in Africa who did not have clean water to drink. The person was from an organization called

charitywater.org, a charity that builds wells for towns in Africa. The wells provide people with clean water. Without wells, people often have to walk many miles to find water, then carry it home in buckets. Often, the water is not clean.

Instead of presents for her ninth birthday, Rachel asked her family and friends to donate \$9 for clean water in Africa to charitywater.org. If she could raise \$300, 15 people could get clean drinking water.

By the time her birthday came, Rachel had raised \$220. That meant that 11 people could get clean water.

She told her mom that she would try harder the next year to raise more money for the charity.

A month later, Rachel was critically injured in a car accident. On July 23, 2011, she was taken off life support. She died soon after.

When the news about Rachel's story and her birthday wish spread, people all around the world began to donate money in her name. Some gave \$9, some \$19, some more. A month later, 30,000 people had given more than \$1.2 million. Because of Rachel Beckwith, 60,000 people in more than 100 villages now have clean water to drink.

In her honor, one village put up a sign that reads, "Rachel's great dream, kindness, and vision of a better world will live with and among us forever." Clearly, one person, even a child, can make a difference.



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**Architecture
The Parthenon**

Architecture, like painting, literature, and other forms of art, reflects the ideals of the people who build it. The Parthenon is the best example of ancient Greek architecture. The structure, created between 447 B.C.E. and 432 B.C.E., tells us a lot about the Greek way of thinking.

In Greece, balance and order were important **principles**¹. The Greeks believed that everything around them happened for a reason. They wanted to find out this reason and discover the order of the world around them. Their buildings were beautiful, but they do not overflow with **frivolity**² or emotion. Instead, Greek buildings define order.

Columns are one **hallmark**³ of classical structure that we associate with Greece and Rome. The Parthenon was built with eight columns on the front and 17 on each side. The building is symmetrical and balanced. Mathematical principles make the design stable. Almost the entire structure is made of marble.

**Architecture
The Duomo**



The Duomo
Florence, Italy

One building, more than any other, marks the arrival of the Renaissance to Europe. Did you know that “naissance” means “birth” in French and that the Renaissance was the rebirth of classical learning in Italy? Art and architecture took off during the Renaissance. Many new **ideas** influenced design. The Duomo, with its grand dome, is a perfect example of new ideas and **innovation**.

Work on the Duomo cathedral, in Florence, Italy, actually started before the Renaissance, in 1296. But the building took 140 years to complete. The **plague**² and many wars prevented construction from continuing on the building as planned. By 1420, the building was almost finished, but there was one serious problem. The plans for the building called for a huge cupola, or dome—bigger than anything built up to that point. No one knew how to build such a dome.

The Influence of the Arch

By ReadWorks



The lasting influence of ancient Rome is apparent in many areas of our contemporary society. Sophisticated elements of law, engineering, literature, philosophy, architecture, and art can all be traced back to the Roman Empire. But perhaps one of the most lasting contributions from Roman civilization is something we see nearly every day: the Roman arch.

An arch is a curved structure designed to support or strengthen a building. Arches are traditionally made of stone, brick, or concrete; some modern arches are made of steel or laminated wood. The wedge-shaped blocks that form the sides of an arch are called voussoirs, and the top center stone, called the keystone, is the last block to be inserted. During construction, the arch is supported from below before the keystone is put in. The curve of an arch may take different shapes, but it is often a rounded or pointed semicircle.

The Party's Over

Parties and **stunts** at the Great Wall of China are now against the law. A stunt is a dangerous or an unusual act that is done for attention.



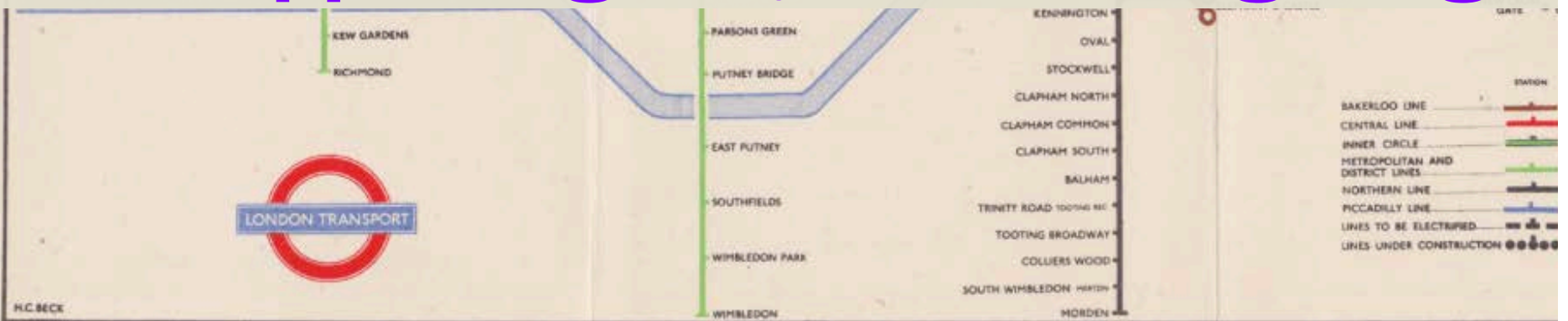
In 2005, Danny Way became the first person to jump over the Great Wall on a skateboard. Over the years, many tourists have climbed the famous wall. Others have jumped over the wall on motorcycles.

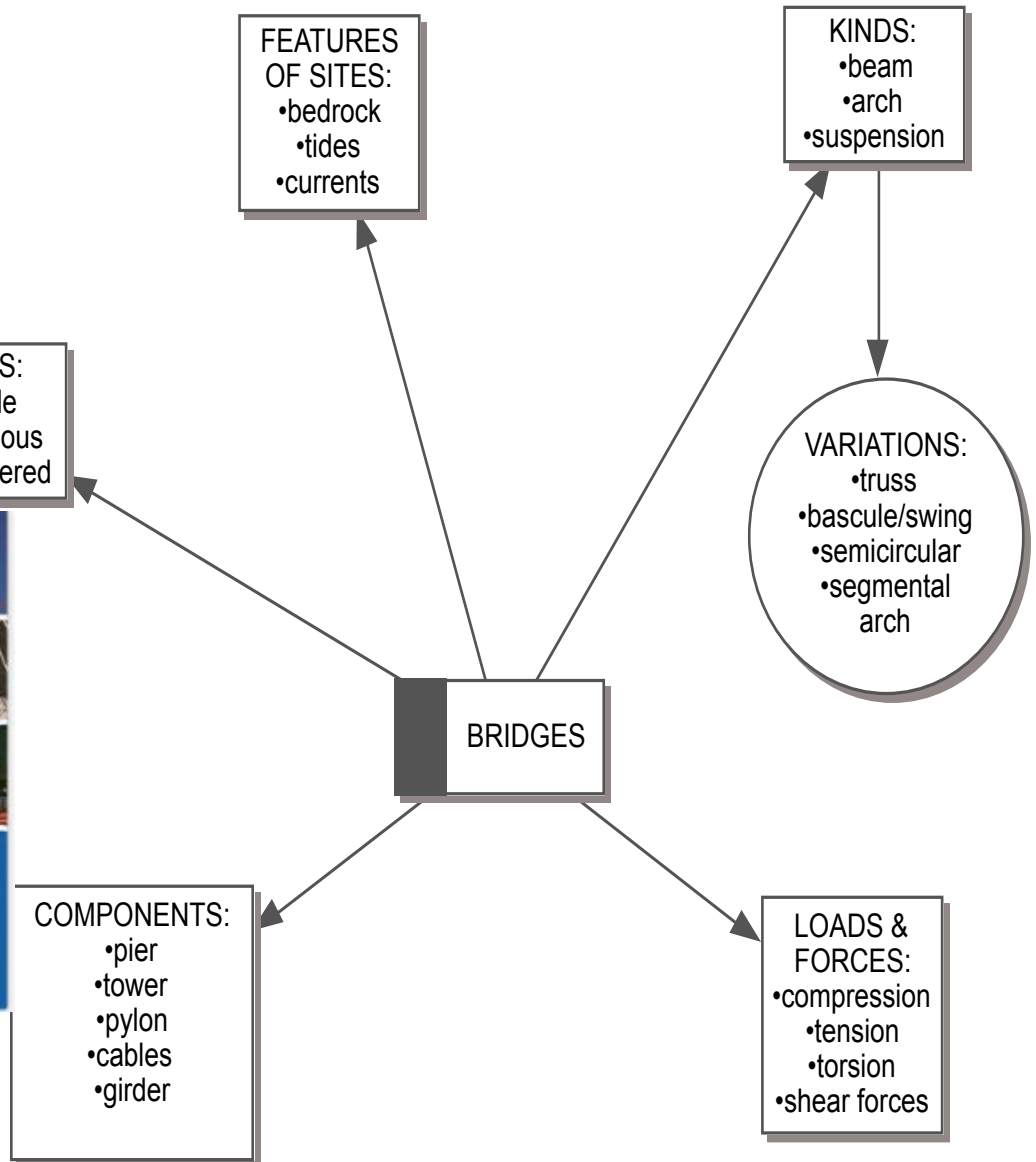
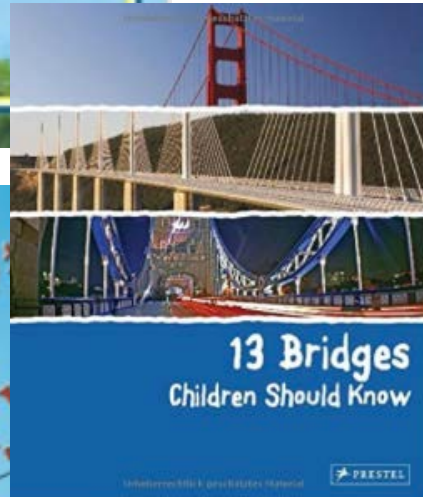
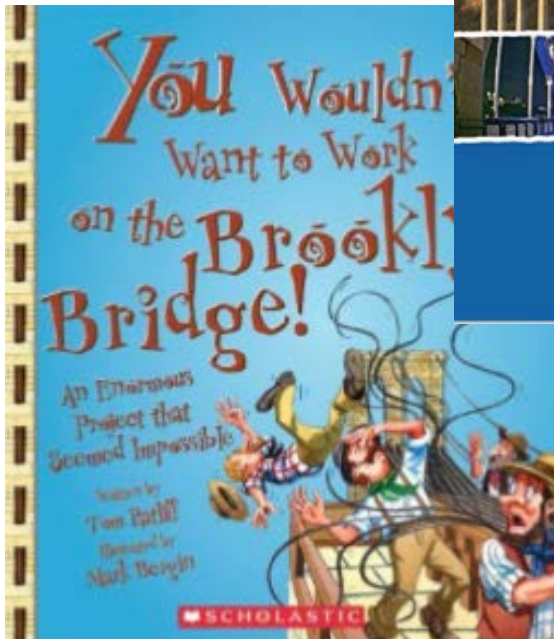
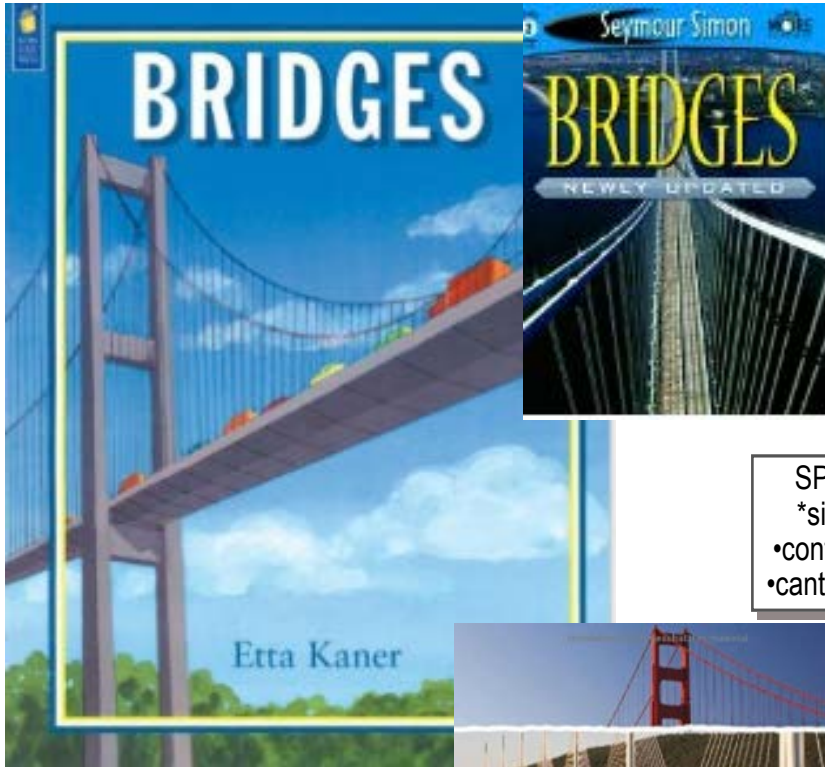
Parties and stunts have caused serious damage to the Great Wall, say officials. The Chinese government has now issued new rules to protect the famous landmark.

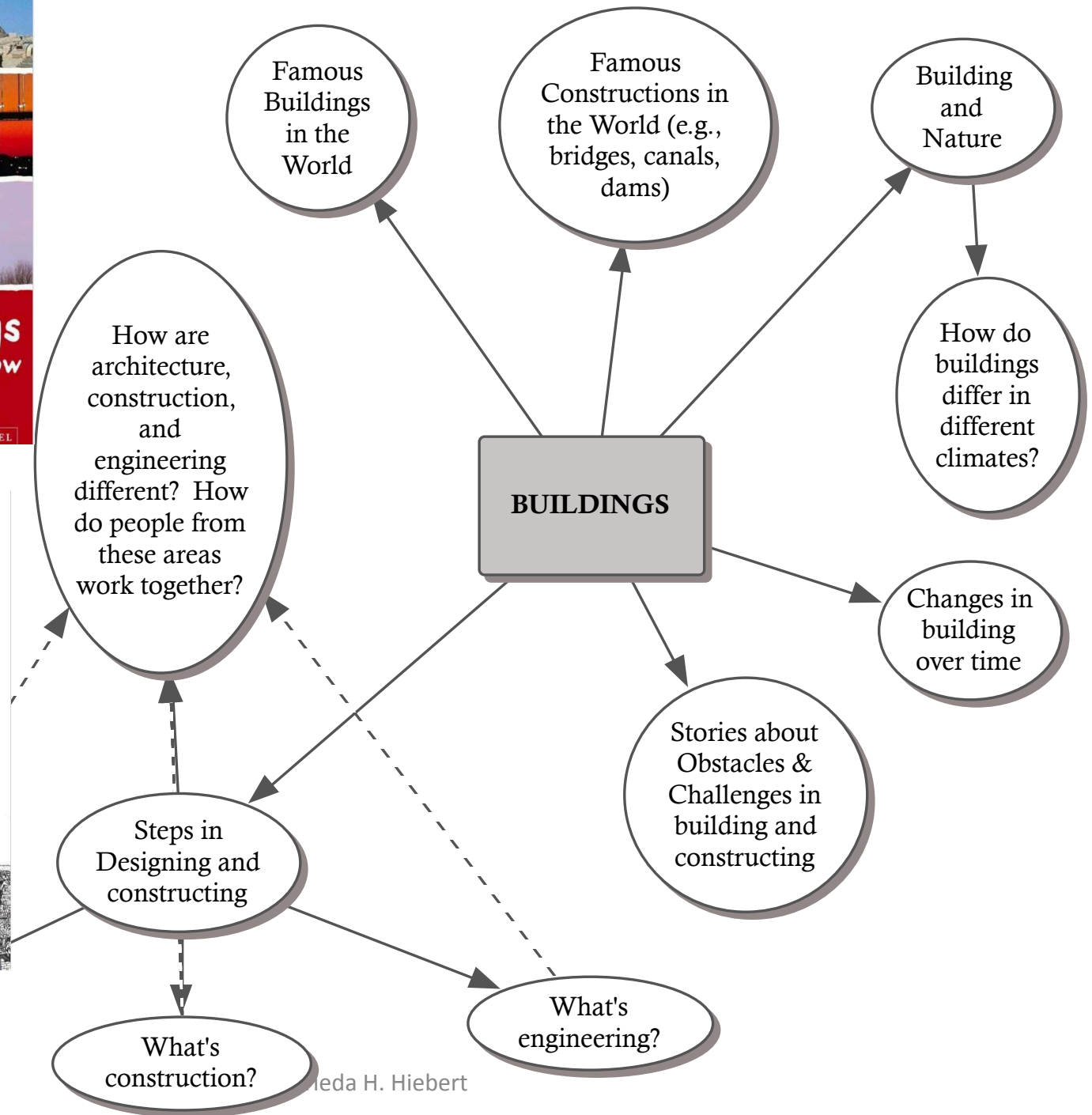
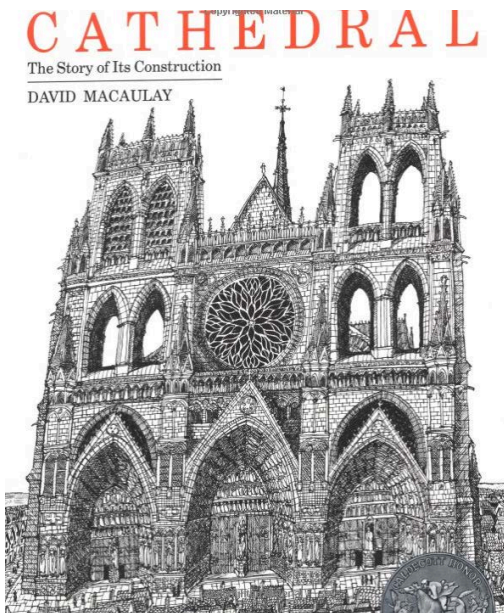
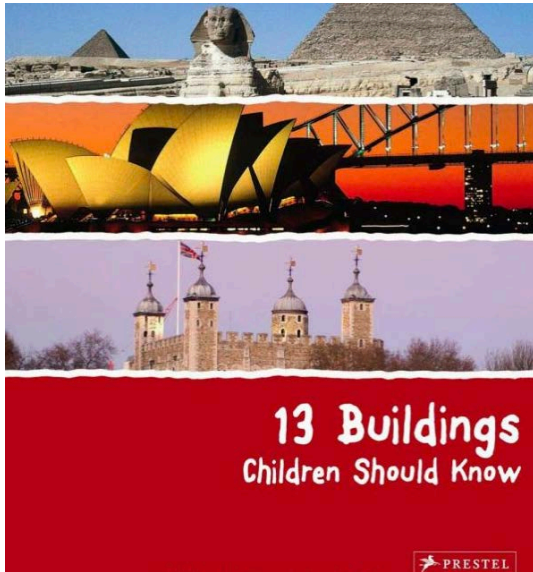
The Great Wall is the longest structure ever built. It twists and turns for more than 4,000 miles through China. Parts of the wall are more than 2,000 years old.



4.3. Support agency: Knowledge logs







Idea	Action	Open-Access Resource
1. English has more words than can be taught.	1. Teach students to expect new words in texts.	1. Talking Points for Teachers: New Words in New Texts
2. A small group of words does the heavy lifting in English.	2. Increase volume of reading	2. 7 minutes of additional reading with student goal setting
3. Rare words in narrative texts belong to synonym networks; those in informational texts in topic networks.	3. Teach students prolific synonym networks & organize topics into networks.	3. •Super Synonym Sets for Stories (S4) •Exceptional Expressions in Everyday Events (E4)
4. Teach vocabulary in the service of developing bodies of knowledge.	4. Develop bodies of knowledge in ELA instruction.	4. •Intentional Read-Aloud Curriculum •ReadWorks & FYI for Kids •Word Pictures



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