



Talking Points for Teachers™: 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 of 4,000 simple word families at: <http://textproject.org/classroom-materials/lists-and-forms/lists/word-zones-for-5-586-most-frequent-words/>)
- Mark the words that are potentially challenging with a different colored highlighter.
 - An example of a snippet of text for a board/projection is the following, which comes from a PARCC sample assessment for Grade 7 (<http://www.parcconline.org/samples/english-language-artsliteracy/grade-7-reading-informational-text-%28Amelia-Earhart-2%29>)



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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.

What?

Here are some of the talking points for a conversation between teachers and middle-school students about new vocabulary in complex texts:

- *“One of your goals as middle schoolers is to understand that any new text likely has words that you haven’t seen before.”*
- *“This is a text from one of the sample assessments for the new state test. This text might look like it is hard and it may even be on the first read. But I’ve studied the text and I know that all of you know most of the words. Even most of the words that you don’t know (point to rusty and stunt) can be figured out with the word skills you have.”*
- *“Also remember that words that are capitalized inside sentences are usually names. The strategy with names is to do the best you can, knowing that names are often pronounced in unusual ways because they may come from different languages. In this case, the person’s last name is one that you can figure out with your knowledge of words (demonstrate with Ear hart).”*
- *“That leaves two words that are multisyllabic in the text and that you might not be able to read (point to exhibition and aviation). I want you to read this paragraph and see if you can figure out these words.”*



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