

USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS TO DEVELOP VOCABULARY

The previous installment of the Teacher's Corner shared strategies for introducing students to topics and exploring what they already know about them. This week will present ideas about how to use authentic materials to develop students' English vocabulary through exposure to and interaction with new words.

One challenge to consider when using authentic materials is that some of the vocabulary may be unfamiliar to your learners. For this reason, it is important to provide opportunities for students to learn new words and interact with them. Sometimes it is helpful for teachers to pre-select new words to teach students, and other times it is more beneficial for students to select the words themselves. Regardless, when special attention is given to unfamiliar words, authentic materials can provide a meaningful context for students to increase vocabulary.

The first activity this week is a great way to teach vocabulary in context. If you don't have a way to access and display photos, you can still use this strategy to teach words without using photos by creating sentences that relate to the topic of your authentic material.

PHOTO VOCABULARY

Time: 40 minutes

Goals:

- To increase students' understanding of new vocabulary words before interacting with an authentic text.
- To listen, speak, read, and write in English.

Materials: Student notebooks and pencils, list of 5-10 vocabulary words from the authentic text (can be teacher or student selected), a photo or photo collage that can be displayed for all

students to see (this can also come from the authentic material if it contains photos), one sentence that relates to the picture(s) for each vocabulary word

Preparation:

1. Determine whether you or your students will select the vocabulary words from the authentic material you plan to use. You or your students should skim the material and list words that may be difficult or unfamiliar. If students are completing this step, you will need to have them do so at least one day ahead of this activity so that you have time to prepare.

Word	Example Sentence	My Guess	Definition
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.

2. Keeping the list of words and the topic presented by the authentic material in mind, find images that can be used to discuss the topic and vocabulary. If the authentic material includes photos, they might work well for this activity. You can use one photograph or a series of related photos arranged in a collage format. A maximum of 5-6 photos is suggested so that students are not overwhelmed. Decide how you will display the photograph(s) so that all students can see them clearly.
3. Write sentences about the photograph(s) using the vocabulary list. Write one sentence for each word and be sure that the sentence conveys what the word means.

Procedure:

1. Tell students that they will be learning new vocabulary words from the selected authentic material by looking at pictures and talking about them. Write this vocabulary chart on the board for students to copy into their notebooks.

2. Display the photograph(s) you selected to teach students the vocabulary. Explain that you will present a word and write it in the chart. Students should also write it down in their vocabulary chart. Then, you will read a sentence related to the photo(s) that contains the word. You will write it on the board and instruct students to copy it in their notebooks.
3. Tell students that after they have copied the example sentence, they will discuss what they think the word means based on the sentence and the photograph(s). They should write any notes, clues, or guesses about the meaning in the My Guess column in their notebooks. This can include the part of speech, native language cognates, clues from the sentence, inferences based on the photo(s), or what group members may already know about the word.
4. Explain that after students have recorded their guesses, a few can share with the class. Then, the teacher will provide the definition or students can look it up themselves and record it in the table.
5. Answer any questions students have. Then, start the process with the first vocabulary word.
6. Repeat the steps with each of the words until all of the words on the list have been taught.

The following activities are a great way to provide students with more practice using new words after the Photo Vocabulary activity. One of these short activities can be used each day or every other day, depending on how long your students are working with the same authentic material. Students can also repeat the activities multiple times with different partners or groups.

VARIOUS ACTIVITIES TO PROVIDE MULTIPLE INTERACTIONS WITH NEW WORDS

Time: About 15 minutes per activity

Goals:

- To provide students with additional opportunities to practice new vocabulary words.
- To listen, speak, read, and write in English.

Materials: Vocabulary charts in students' notebooks from the Photo Vocabulary activity or words and definitions from any other method you have used to teach new words, pencils, index cards or small pieces of paper, student notebooks

ACTIVITY ONE: PARTNER QUIZ

Procedure:

1. Have students get into pairs and decide who will be partner 1 and who will be partner 2.
2. To start, partner 1 should have the Vocabulary Chart in front of them and partner 2 should not. Depending on the level of your students, you may want to provide a list of the vocabulary words on the board as a support.
3. Using the chart, partner 1 will give partner 2 clues about one of the words. They could read the example sentence and leave out the vocabulary word, provide a definition, or make up their own clues (part of speech, synonyms, antonyms, etc.). Partner 2 should try to guess which word partner 1 is referring to.
4. Repeat the process until partner 2 has successfully guessed all of the words. Then, partners switch roles and repeat.

ACTIVITY TWO: VOCABULARY TRIO

Preparation:

1. Gather index cards or small pieces of paper, enough for every student in your class to have one.
2. Determine how many groups of 3 students can be formed from your class. If you have extra students left, you can also participate in the activity.

Procedure:

1. Divide your class into thirds as evenly as possible. Assign each third one part of the vocabulary chart: word, example sentence, or definition. Be sure that each group knows which part of the chart they have been assigned.
2. Explain to students that they will be responsible for writing either a word, definition, or example sentence for their assigned part of the chart on their index card/paper. Tell

students in the example sentence group to replace the vocabulary word with a blank when they write down the sentence.

3. Within each third, have students count off 1-10 (or up to as many vocabulary words as are on the list), repeating as needed. Tell students to use the chart to write down the corresponding word, definition, or sentence for their number. For instance, a student with the number 4 in the example sentence group would write down the example sentence for the 4th word in the chart, a student with the number 8 in the definition group would write down the definition for the 8th word in the chart, etc.
4. Once students have written down their assigned information, collect all the cards and mix them up.
5. Tell students that they will get a new card that will contain a word, sentence, or definition. Once a signal is given, students should move around the room and compare cards with others to try to form a trio that matches the word, example sentence, and definition correctly.

ACTIVITY THREE: EXCHANGE AND FILL IN THE BLANK

Procedure:

1. Have students get into groups of three and work together to write sentences in their notebooks using the vocabulary words. If helpful, you can display the photos from the Photo Vocabulary activity for students to refer to.
2. Have each group copy their sentences on a new sheet of paper, leaving a blank where the vocabulary words go.
3. Then have groups exchange papers. Group members work together to fill in the missing vocabulary words using the chart in their notebooks.
4. When finished, students return their completed sentences to the group that wrote them so they can check for accuracy.

The last Teacher's Corner for this month will focus on strategies to support students' comprehension when working with authentic materials. Additionally, suggestions for final activities to help students summarize their learning will be presented.