



# Unlocking Reading Comprehension

Strategies for Educators

## Words, Words, Words: The Building Blocks of Reading Comprehension

Use the checklist below for applying what you learned about developing students' vocabulary to support reading comprehension.

### To build reading comprehension through vocabulary instruction, I will:

- Plan morphology instruction based on high-priority skills that will enhance students' performance in reading and spelling.  
*Examples:* compound words (Grades K–1), contractions and common inflected endings (Grades 1–2), common prefixes and suffixes (Grades 2–3), Latin roots (Grade 4), Greek roots (Grade 5)
- Teach **incidental** and **explicit** vocabulary instruction through a variety of texts and activities.
- Structure my vocabulary instruction to include a variety of tiered vocabulary.
  - **Tier I:** high-frequency words that rarely require instructional attention  
*Examples:* clock, ball, baby, run, happy
  - **Tier II:** high-frequency words for mature language users found across a variety of knowledge domains  
*Examples:* fortunate, absurd, coincidence
  - **Tier III:** lower-frequency words limited to specific knowledge domains  
*Examples:* isotope, refinery, peninsula
- Create a list of Tier II (narrative) and Tier III (expository) words to be taught during the week by examining the types of texts students will be reading.
- Develop word consciousness by analyzing language (e.g., expressions, figures of speech, word associations, word formations), engaging in word games, and encouraging word wizards (i.e., a motivational strategy to support students in using newly learned words) in my classroom.