Language-Based Literacy Activities

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Vocabulary Development

Purpose:
To work on the meaning of new words found in your classroom textbooks and assignments.

Material:
Try to use materials from the classroom textbooks for this activity and take a look at a couple of the examples that follow.

Procedures:
1. In this first activity, pick out words from any of the textbooks you think might be difficult for students who struggle to learn. (See page 2, Definition & Sentence: War of the Worlds). These are some of the words that might be difficult for students in the sixth grade.

2. Next, pick a word to work on and write it down on the board or on the students’ paper, and read a sentence from the book that has the word in it. For example, for the word jet, the sentence, “The jet travels at a high speed,” could be read.

3. Next, come up with a meaning of the word, a picture for the word, and a word that means the same thing.

4. Work with the students and provide suggestions to make this a meaningful activity.

5. Then take the text and read, as a class or in small groups. Have students raise their hands if they understood these target words as they occur in the reading text. Provide enough “wait time” for all students to take turns and participate. Then let students create their own definitions of these words. If needed, the students could go back to the original form containing the definitions. (Recall, you are focusing on students who struggle to learn but you can have all students participate in these activities).

Additional Information:
6. There are so many ways to work on word meanings/vocabulary. For example, you could make up crossword puzzles, games or fun activities (War of the Worlds Crossword Puzzle-see page 4). It might even be interesting to have the students write their own sentence on each new word. Possibly, they could quiz each other about the words. Another idea is to use a matching or complete the sentence activity. (See activity on page 5)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Vocabulary: Activity #1</th>
<th>Synonym</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>astronomer</td>
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<td>A scientist who studies outer space</td>
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<tr>
<td>jet</td>
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<td>A very fast plane</td>
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<td>meteorite</td>
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<td>Large rock from outerspace</td>
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<td>ventriloquist</td>
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<td>Entertainer who performs with a dummy who seems to speak</td>
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<td>announcer</td>
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<td>A person who makes comments or reads news on radio or television</td>
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<tr>
<td>broadcast</td>
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<td>A radio or television program or transmission</td>
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<tr>
<td>account</td>
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<td>A written or spoken description of events</td>
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<tr>
<td>script</td>
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<td>A text of a play</td>
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<tr>
<td>clues</td>
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<td>Facts that help solve a problem or mystery</td>
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Vocabulary Activity #2
War of the Worlds

Across
5. A person who announces things in public, on television, or on the radio.
6. The remains of a rock that fell from space and landed on the Earth's surface.
7. The written text of a play or movie; includes everything the performers say and do.

Down
1. A written or spoken description of what happened.
2. A scientist who studies the sun, moon, stars, and planets.
3. A short film and commentary about current news events.
4. Evidence that helps solve a problem.
Matching
Match each definition with a word

1. The written text of a play or movie; includes everything the performers say and do
2. A written or spoken description of what happened
3. A very fast plane
4. A short film and commentary about current news events
5. Scientist who studies the sun, moon, stars, planets
6. Someone who announces things in public, on television, or on the radio
7. Evidence that helps to solve a problem
8. A person skilled in speaking in such a way that the voice seems to come from another person
9. The remains of a rock that fell from space and landed on the Earth’s surface
10. Sound or pictures transmitted over radio or television

Complete the Sentence
Write the word that best completes each of the following sentences.

1. Actors read their lines from the ________________.
2. A very fast ________________.
3. Years ago many people depended on the movie ________________ for news.
4. Crater Lake was aed by the impact of a giant ________________.
5. When the ________________ performed we couldn’t see his lips move.
6. An ________________ uses a telescope to study stars and planets.
7. The police made a sweep of the area, looking for ________________.
8. Rod Fowler is the ________________ for the Channel 8 evening news.
9. The football game was ________________ on channel 7.
10. Judy had to give an ________________ of her actions during the robbery.
**Figurative Language**

**Purpose:**
To help students understand what is meant by figurative language (using language in a creative and imaginary way, rather than how it typically used).

**Materials:**
Possibly a book of examples of figurative language.

**Procedures:**
1. Figurative language means any language that has meaning other than the meaning stated. So, for example, “She’s a walking encyclopedia”, means that she just knows a lot of information. Another might be, “He’s driving me up a wall”. This means that he is bugging me or making me crazy. *(See page 7, A Mission to Oshkosh)*

2. You could introduce one idiom to students each day or during each session.

3. An idiom is a word that can have a literal meaning and a meaning that is different from the way it’s usually used. For example, “bit off more than you can chew”, or “get the ball rolling”, “knock it off”, “rule of thumb”, “sink or swim”, or “underdog”.

4. Ask the student what some of these idioms mean. Also, students could think of other idioms.

5. Over time, review these types of idioms and encourage students to learn new concepts.

**Additional Information:**
1. Encourage students to think of idioms that they have heard at home, on TV, in books, etc.

2. Use some kind of game to practice the meanings of the idioms that have been learned.
nervous

Millie should have had cold feet upon spying the green alligator-like monster across the street. Having a stiff upper lip she hurled herself like a Green Bay Packer at the enormous alligator. She just had to keep her dog Jack away from the

flawless
dangerous reptiles. It seemed like a foolproof plan at the time. But when Millie

running into something that doesn’t move
rammed into the monster, it was like hitting a brick wall. She fell to the groud with

made her breathless
a half the wind knocked out of her.

Millie should have had cold feet upon spying the green alligator-like monster across the street. Having a stiff upper lip she hurled herself like a Green Bay Packer at the enormous alligator. She just had to keep her dog Jack away from the dangerous reptiles. It seemed like a foolproof plan at the time. But when Millie rammed into the monster, it was like hitting a brick wall. She fell to the groud with a half the wind knocked out of her.
Comprehension of Characters and Setting in a Literature Book

**Purpose:**
To help students understand characters and settings in the books that they read in school.

**Materials:**
2. Attached form.

**Procedure:**
1. Read the literature book to find the setting of the story and the details about the characters. This information is usually in the first two chapters.

2. Then, students could make a web or some kind of chart of characters and setting details. *(See page 9, graphic organizer)*

3. As students read the story, they can fill in the graphic organizer.

4. This should help them understand characters and setting better so they can talk about it in a class discussion. This is especially helpful for books that have a lot of characters, like How To Kill a Mockingbird.
To Kill A Mockingbird
By Harper Lee

Characters
- Cunningham
- Ewell
- Robinson
- Haverford
- Radley
- Finch
- Other Town Folk

Plot
- Intro.
- Rising Action
- Conflict
- Resolution

Setting
- When
- Where

Other Town Folk
Inferenceing

Purpose:
To help students understand inferencing.

Materials:
1. Students’ classroom textbooks.
2. Attached forms.

Procedures:
1. Inferencing is the process that the reader must go through to understand the meaning of what is written and what the writer meant. For example, if a textbook says, “It was fall, and winter was coming soon”, this implies that the leaves were changing colors and falling off the trees, the weather was becoming cooler, it was football season, and school had started again.

2. If students read “We had a very hard winter”, they might think that it was cold, and there was a lot of snow and ice (See page 11)

3. Take any textbook and work together to come up with words, phrases, or sentences from a paragraph where you need to use inferencing (Show another textbook from their curriculum)
Inferencing is “The process that the reader must go through to get literal meaning of what is written to what the writer intended to convey.”

Example:

More than half of all accidents in the United States happen on streets and highways. Almost 50,000 people died in automobile accidents in a recent year, and almost 2 million others were seriously injured. These statistics include pedestrians, bicycle riders and automobile drivers and passengers.

What I inferenced from the paragraph above:
It’s easier to not pay attention when driving and get into an accident.

1) When people inhale polluted air, harmful materials called pollutants enter their bodies. Regularly breathing certain pollutants increase a person’s chances of developing certain diseases, such as lung cancer and emphysema. Polluted air can also make diseases such as allergies, asthma, colds and pneumonia more severe.

What did you inference from this paragraph?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

2) Smokers may use many different methods to stop. Some smokers may smoke fewer and fewer cigarettes each day until they have stopped altogether. Other people use a set of special filters, each of which takes a little more nicotine from the smoke. Other people are able to stop smoking all at once and never smoke again. In time they find that the desire goes away.

What did you inference from this paragraph?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Visual Strategies

Purpose:
To help students understand information in their textbooks by using pictures that represent the key points within the text.

Materials:
1. Students’ classroom textbooks.

Procedures:
1. Use a story that has pictures to help the students understand the story. *(Show a textbook from their curriculum)*

2. If using a story without pictures students can work together to come up with pictures to help make the story easier to understand. *(Show a textbook from their curriculum)*
Written Language: Complete Versus Incomplete Sentences

Purpose:
To help students understand the difference between complete and incomplete sentences. A lot of students do not write in complete sentences, but this is a very important skill if they want to get a job.

Materials:
1. Students’ classroom textbooks.
2. Attached forms.

Procedures:
1. Sentences have two parts a subject and a predicate. The subject names someone or something. Predicates tell what the subject is or does. An easy way to think of it; Subject: Who or what is the sentence about? Predicate: What happened?

2. Try to make a couple of complete sentences. (Talk to students about sentences, subjects and predicates, and explain why the sentence is complete)

3. Next have students try to come up with a couple of incomplete sentences. What’s missing from these sentences? Why are they not complete? How could you fix them?

4. To practice, students could do a worksheet that has sentences from one of their textbooks in school. Students could figure out if each sentence is complete or incomplete. (See page 14)
Complete or Incomplete Sentences
Crash

Directions:
Write the letter C in front of the sentence if it is a complete sentence.
Write the letter I in front of the sentence if it is an incomplete sentence.

____ 1. Penn turned, sagging.
____ 2. He sniffed.
____ 3. But I was having problems hating him.
____ 4. Draw!
____ 5. I glared at him.
____ 6. But your real name is John Patrick Coogan
____ 8. I was kind of curious to get a look at the boss dorks.
____ 9. And I didn’t like him calling me friend.
____ 10. I couldn’t tell this moron anything.
____ 11. I put the turtle on its back in the middle of the sidewalk.
____ 12. So I gave it back to him.
____ 13. If you beat me in wrestling.
____ 14. Did you know your son is a Quaker?
____ 15. I dumped the meatball in the middle of their front steps.

By C. Brunken
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Test Modifications

Purpose:
To help students be successful when taking tests at school by helping them show what they understand.

Materials:
1. Try to get a copy of the test the students would take from their teacher. Then use it to show the students how to be more successful when taking that test.

2. Some changes could be made to the tests such as; adding a word bank for fill-in-the-blank questions, reducing the number of choices in multiple choice questions, and taking out confusing words.

3. Another example is the use of highlighting key words in each question to let the students know what to pay attention to. (See page 16)
Social Studies  
Chapter 9 Test

Name: ________________________  Date: ______________________

Choose the correct answer and write it on the line.

___ 1. The Mayas grew **one main crop**. It provided the people with plenty of food.
   What crop was it?
   a. Tomatoes  
   b. Corn  
   c. Squash

___ 2. The Mayas were the first people to develop a **system for writing** down their ideas. The system was called __________.
   a. Hieroglyphics  
   b. Pyramids  
   c. Chinampas

___ 3. Who was at the **bottom** of the Mayan social pyramid?
   a. Priests  
   b. Farmers  
   c. Nobles

___ 4. Who was at the top of the Mayan social pyramid?
   a. Farmers  
   b. Traders  
   c. Priests

___ 5. The Aztecs used **floating gardens** to grow their food. These were called ____.
   a. Chinampas  
   b. Hieroglyphics  
   c. Causeways

___ 6. The Aztecs **required all children** to ________.

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Paragraph Organizers

**Purpose:**
To give students an outline for writing paragraphs in a regular classroom.

**Materials:**
1. Students’ classroom textbooks.
2. Hangouts.

**Procedures:**
1. Many students have a hard time writing paragraphs, even in high school. Often, the organization does not make sense to them, and it is hard to understand how to write a good paragraph.

2. The first example we have is an organizer that works well with older students. Students would come up with the main idea and supporting details. *(See page 18)*
Paragraph Organizer

Topic Sentence:
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

Supporting Details:
1)______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
2)______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
3)______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
4)______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

Conclusion:_________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

Paragraph
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

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Classroom Behavior Rating Scale

**Purpose:**
To give students a tool for rating their ongoing communication behavior in the classroom setting.

**Materials:**
1. See attached example.

**Procedures:**
1. First, observe the students and talk to them, their teachers, and their parents to figure out which communication behaviors to target. For example, students might need to work on taking turns in a conversation, staying on topic, or not interrupting the person they are talking to.

2. Once several communication behaviors that are challenging for the student is decided, a rating scale is developed. *(See page 20)* It may be helpful to meet with the student, their teachers, and their parents to show how to use the rating scale.

3. For example, the student could rate themself at the end of each class period, and the teacher could also rate the students at the end of each class.

4. At the end of the day, the student could review the form. The student could compare their answers with the teacher’s.
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<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Self Rating</th>
<th>Teacher Rating</th>
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<tr>
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1=Never    2=Occasionally  3=Half of the time  4=Most of the time  5=Always
Date:___________

Start Time: ___:___  End Time ___:___

Total Time: ______

Pretend you are the teacher at the last school you attended. What would you have done as the teacher to make school more successful for students like yourselves?

Student ID Numbers:_____________________________________________________________

*Try to precede each utterance with individual ID numbers if possible.

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<th>ID #</th>
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