

# **Achieving Durable Gains in Academic Vocabulary with Long-Term ELLs**

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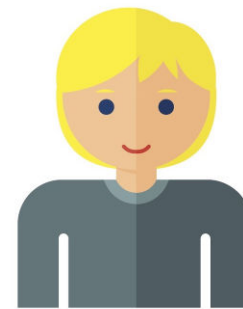
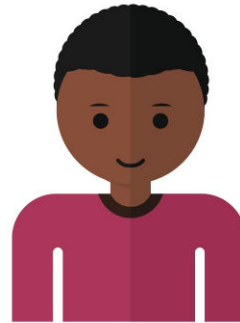
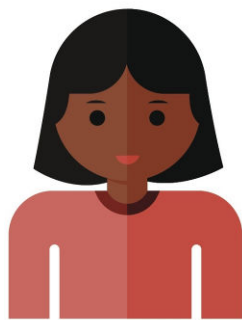
[austinm@fitchburg.k12.ma.us](mailto:austinm@fitchburg.k12.ma.us)

MATSOL Conference Practice-Oriented Presentation

Friday, May 6 2015, 10:30am–11:15am, Ashland

# Long Term ELLs

- Mostly educated exclusively in the U.S.
- Nativelike accents and control of social language.
- Below grade level in reading and writing.





**PUBLIC**

**SERVICE**

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

# Independent Reading



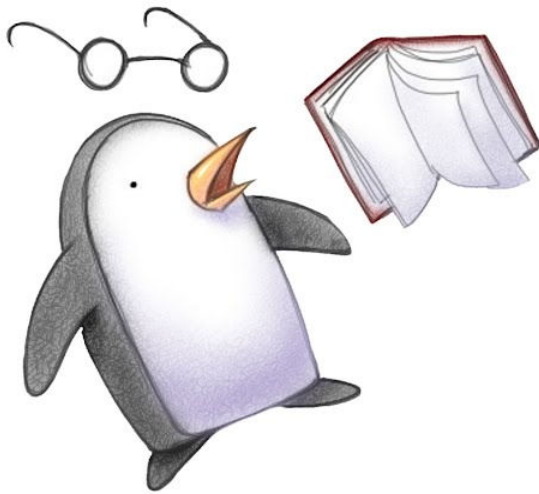
I have known my friend Natalia all my life. Her mother and mine are best friends. She is not one bit smarter than me. Why am I in ESL and she's not?



# Stephen Krashen Quote

“There is massive evidence that self-selected reading, or reading what you want to read, is responsible for most of our literacy development. Readers have better reading ability, know more vocabulary, write better, spell better, and have better control of complex grammatical constructions. In fact, it is impossible to develop high levels of literacy without being a dedicated reader, and dedicated readers rarely have serious problems in reading and writing.”

I Hate Reading!



# Reluctant Readers

- Reluctant readers almost never like the books you like.
  - Forget about “quality.” Get them reading anything by any means necessary.
- **Put the right book in the hands of a young person at the right time and you can change his or her life.**





# High Interest Easy Reads

- Call them “**quick reads**” with students because “easy” can be a turn off.
- Lower reading level & older interest level
  - Darby Creek Publishing
  - High Interest Publishing - HIP Books
  - Orca Book Publishers

# Take Advantage of Amazon

- Student names a book which he or she liked.
- Find Amazon suggestions for readers who bought that book.
- Student reads synopses and “looks inside” books.
- Beg, buy, borrow or steal a book that appeals.

Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought



A screenshot of the Amazon 'Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought' section. It features a horizontal scroll of six book recommendations. Each recommendation includes a book cover with a 'LOOK INSIDE!' banner, the book title, author name, star rating, number of reviews, format, and price with the Prime logo. A left arrow button is visible on the far left.

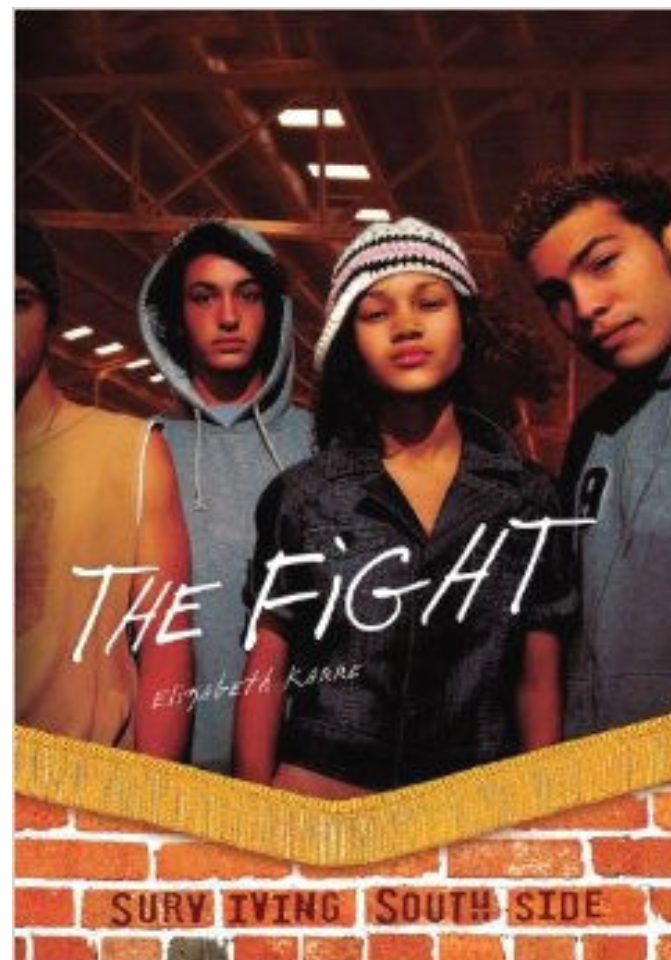
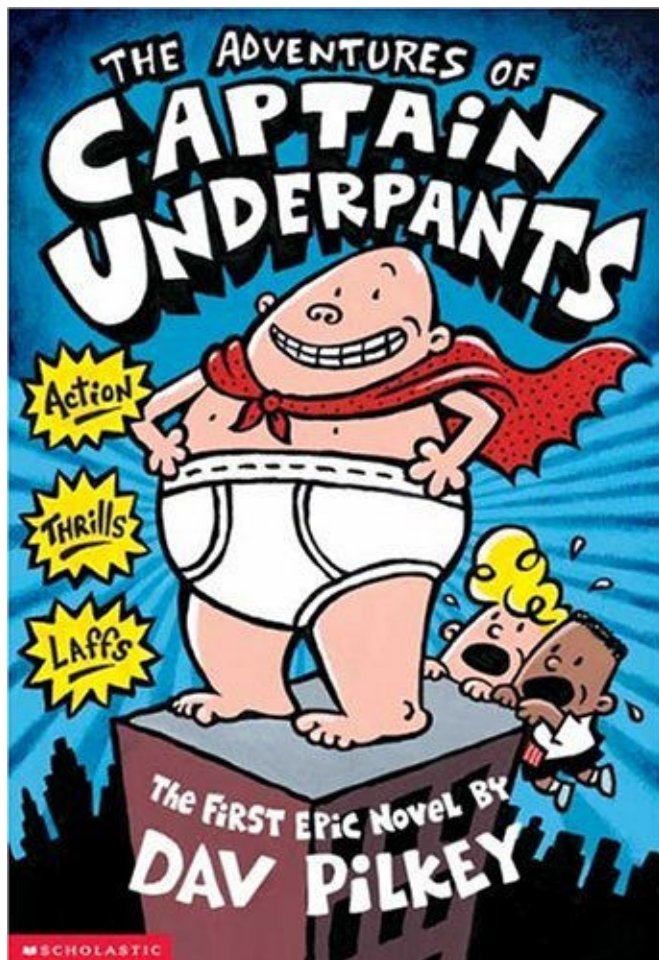
Book Title	Author	Rating	Reviews	Format	Price	Prime
Street Pharm	Allison van Diepen	4.5	22	Paperback	\$9.81	Yes
Snitch	Allison van Diepen	4.5	31	Paperback	\$9.10	Yes
Homeboyz	Alan Lawrence Sitomer	4.5	18	Paperback	\$8.89	Yes
Tyrell	Coe Booth	4.5	47	Paperback	\$8.54	Yes
Lockdown	Walter Dean Myers	4.5	36	Paperback	\$9.18	Yes
Bronxwood	Coe Booth	4.5	26	Paperback	\$9.18	Yes

# Popular Series

## Urban Middle School Reluctant Readers

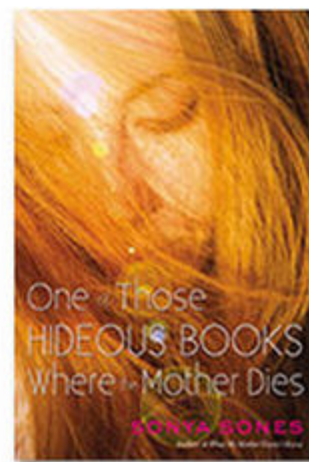
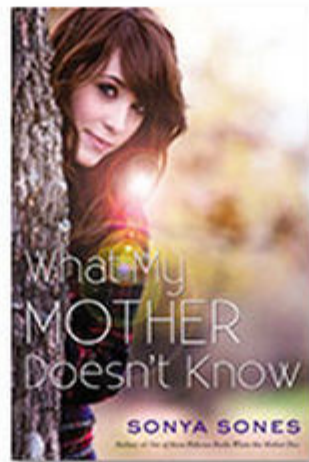
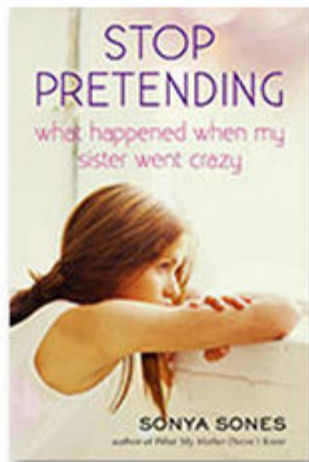
- **Big Nate**
- **Bluford High**
- Border Town
- Captain Underpants
- Dark Man
- Dead Is
- Dear Dumb Diary
- **Dork Diaries**
- Goosebumps
- HIP Edge Novels
- HIP Senior Novels
- Jake Maddox Sports Stories
- Joey Pigza
- Junie B. Jones
- Kimani Tru
- Lorimer Side Streets
- Matt Christopher Sports Classics
- Matt Christopher Sports Fiction
- Mike Lupica
- Night Fall (Darby Creek)
- Orca Currents
- Orca Limelights
- Orca Soundings
- Orca Sports
- Riot Brothers
- Shredderman
- Stoke Books Titles
- **Surviving Southside**
- The Alternative
- Travel Team
- **Urban Underground**
- **Wimpy Kid**

# High Interest Easy Read Books

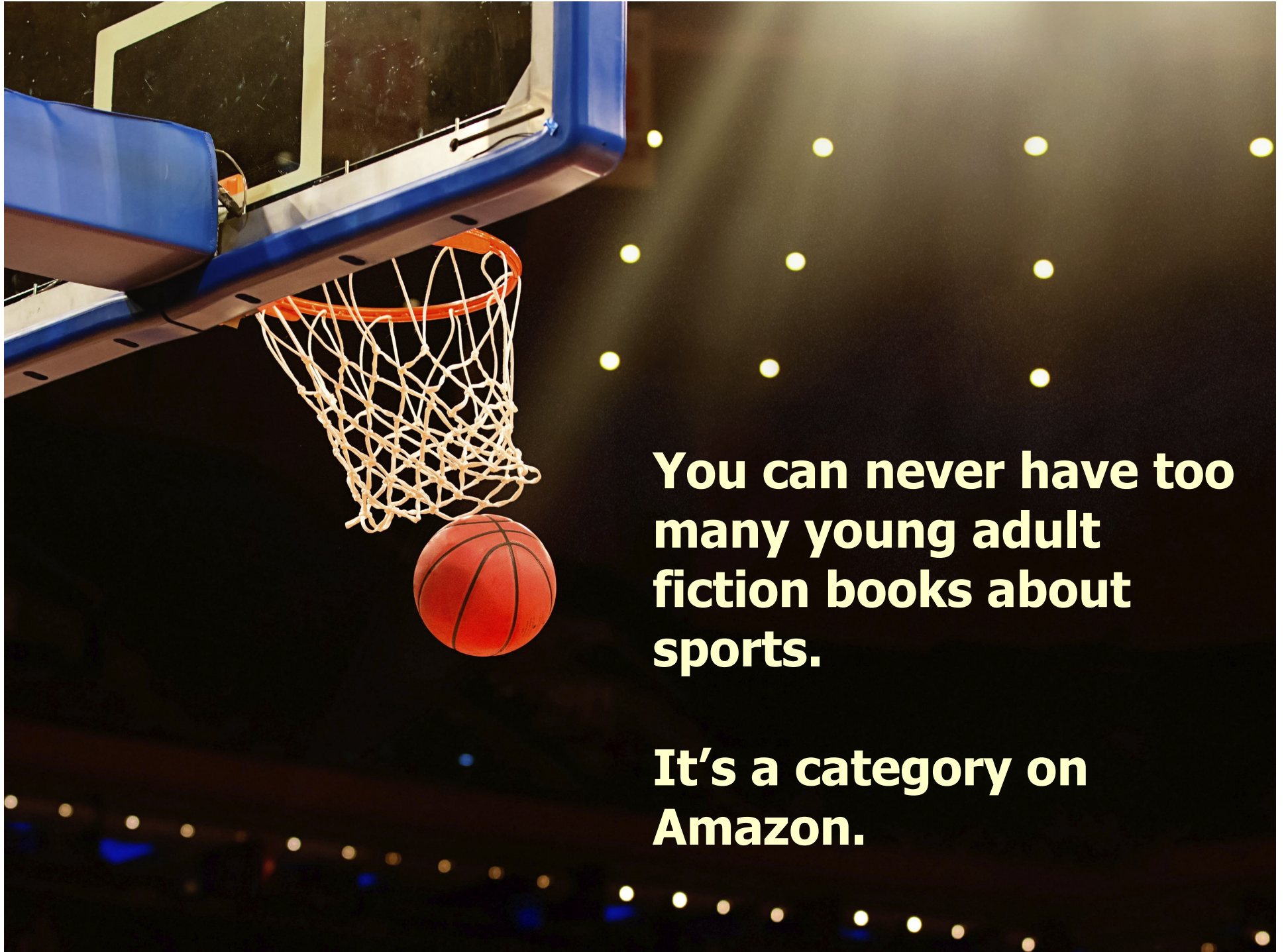


Two examples of books at a fourth grade reading level.

# The best books for reluctant readers you've never heard of:







**You can never have too many young adult fiction books about sports.**

**It's a category on Amazon.**

# Building a Classroom Library

Find secondhand booksellers online. Ask them to sell multiple titles together to save shipping costs.

Search for on eBay for book lots of popular series.

Example: LOT WIMPY KID

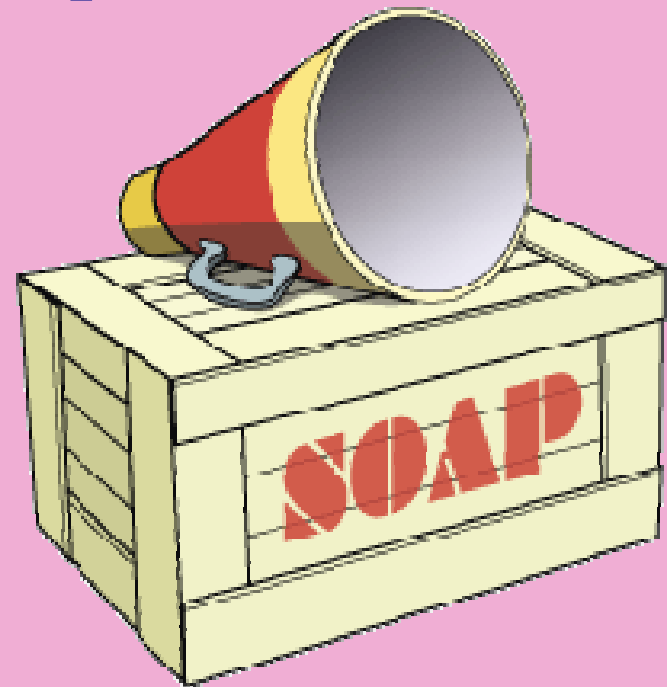
Find high-quality children's books at prices 50 to 90 percent below retail at FirstBook.org.

Post a project to be funded on DonorsChoose.org

You may use my spreadsheet of high interest titles as a resource.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1sKoPCtunE9g5f9BX2hWpj6Tw\\_MADeYmG-3VcI3dtkYA/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1sKoPCtunE9g5f9BX2hWpj6Tw_MADeYmG-3VcI3dtkYA/edit?usp=sharing)

**Okay, now on to the subject  
of teaching academic  
vocabulary...**



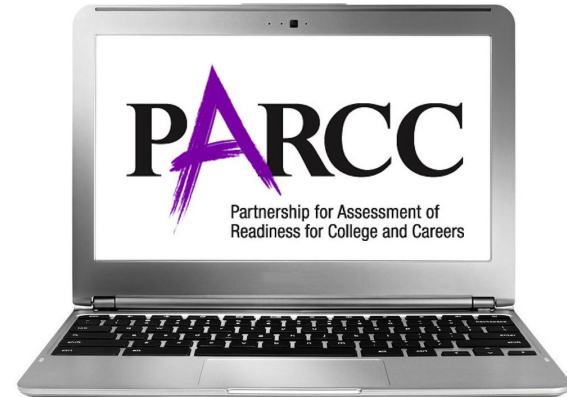


# My Teaching Assignment

- Exclusively *long-term* English language learners in grades 5-8.
- Considerable success in using non-fiction text to teach academic vocabulary.
- Maximizing comprehensible input and providing as many rich interactions with high-value vocabulary as possible.

# Academic Vocabulary

Research in urban middle schools has found that academic vocabulary is a particular source of difficulty for students who struggle with reading comprehension.  
(Lesaux, n.d.)



\$#@%!  
What does  
"analyze"  
mean?



# Academic Word List (AWL)

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/>

- 570 word families, sorted by word frequency and range, which occur frequently over a wide range of academic texts. (Coxhead)
- Does not include the 2000 most common words in English.
- Approximately 10% of the vocabulary in academic non-fiction texts, compared to only 1.4% of the words in fiction texts.

# Academic Word List

- **Sublist 1** contains the most common words.
- **Sublist 2** words occur with the next highest frequency. And so on....
- **Sublist 10** includes the least frequently used words from this collection of high incidence words.
- The list contains the most frequent form of each word.



# AWL Action Research

- The first administration of this vocabulary scanner was given at the beginning of the 2011-12 school year to 37 transitioning ESL students in grades 5-8.
- Sentence completion assessments demonstrated a strong correlation between growth in knowledge of AWL vocabulary with other measures of academic progress.

# AWL Sentence Completion Test

- Assessment items were primarily adapted from *Wordsmyth Online Beginner's Dictionary* with a few items adapted from examples from the *Collins Cobuild School Dictionary of American English*.
- All answer choices represented the same part of speech and, in the case of verbs, the same tense.

# AWL Sublist 1 Assessment

## Fall 2011 (before AWL focus)

Percentage of 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade ESL students who answered sentence-completion test items correctly for each word.

available	97%	proceed	65%	function	41%
respond	97%	benefit	62%	structure	41%
data	86%	economy	62%	income	38%
assume	84%	method	62%	legislate	38%
specific	84%	research	62%	sector	35%
identify	81%	similar	62%	factor	32%
role	81%	consist	59%	evident	30%
section	81%	estimate	59%	indicate	30%
area	76%	formula	59%	theory	30%
creates	76%	authority	57%	approach	27%
involve	76%	define	57%	distribute	27%
individual	73%	require	57%	assess	24%
occur	73%	concept	51%	derive	24%
policy	73%	export	51%	principle	24%
context	70%	issues	51%	finance	22%
percent	68%	period	51%	major	22%
source	68%	analyze	46%	process	22%
contract	65%	legal	46%	labor	16%
environment	65%	interpret	43%	significant	16%
establish	65%	constitute	41%	vary	14%



# 2011-12 Results

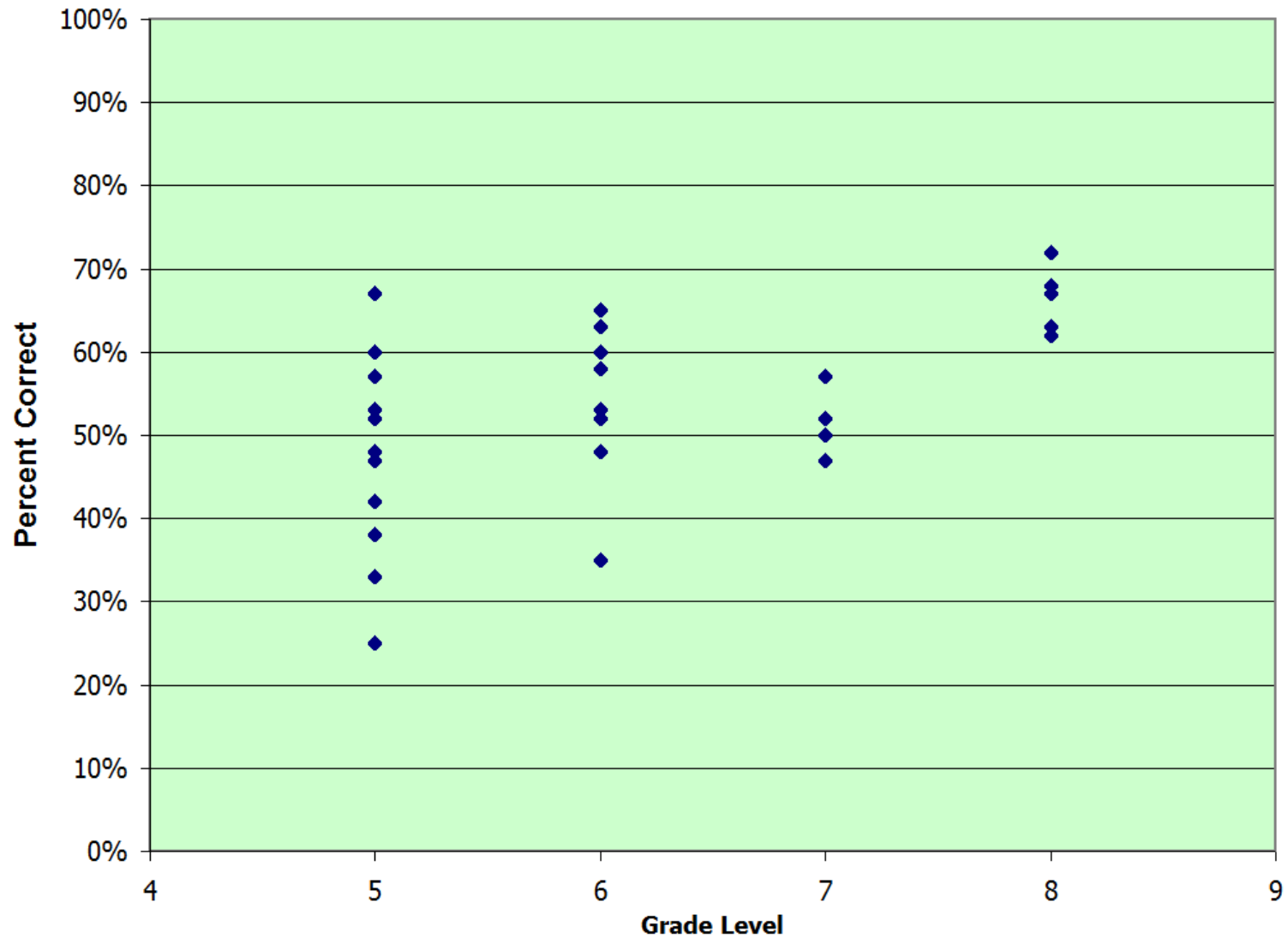
- Pre-test showed minimal correlation between student grade level and AWL knowledge.
- Median 53% correct AWL sublist 1 words.
- There *was* correlation with reading levels.
  - ESL students who scored over 60% on the AWL test tended to be placed in stanine 5 and 4 for the GRADE total test.
  - Students who scored below 40% on the AWL assessment all showed a second or third grade total test grade equivalent on the GRADE.

# AWL Knowledge and ELA MCAS

- ESL students who scored 80% correct by the end of the year on sentence completion tests of the most common 60 words on the Academic Word List almost invariably scored proficient on ELA MCAS.
- The test has been given to a number of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who tested 250 or higher on 7<sup>th</sup> Grade MCAS. Some have gotten one question wrong. Most score 100%.

# AWL Sublist 1 Assessment

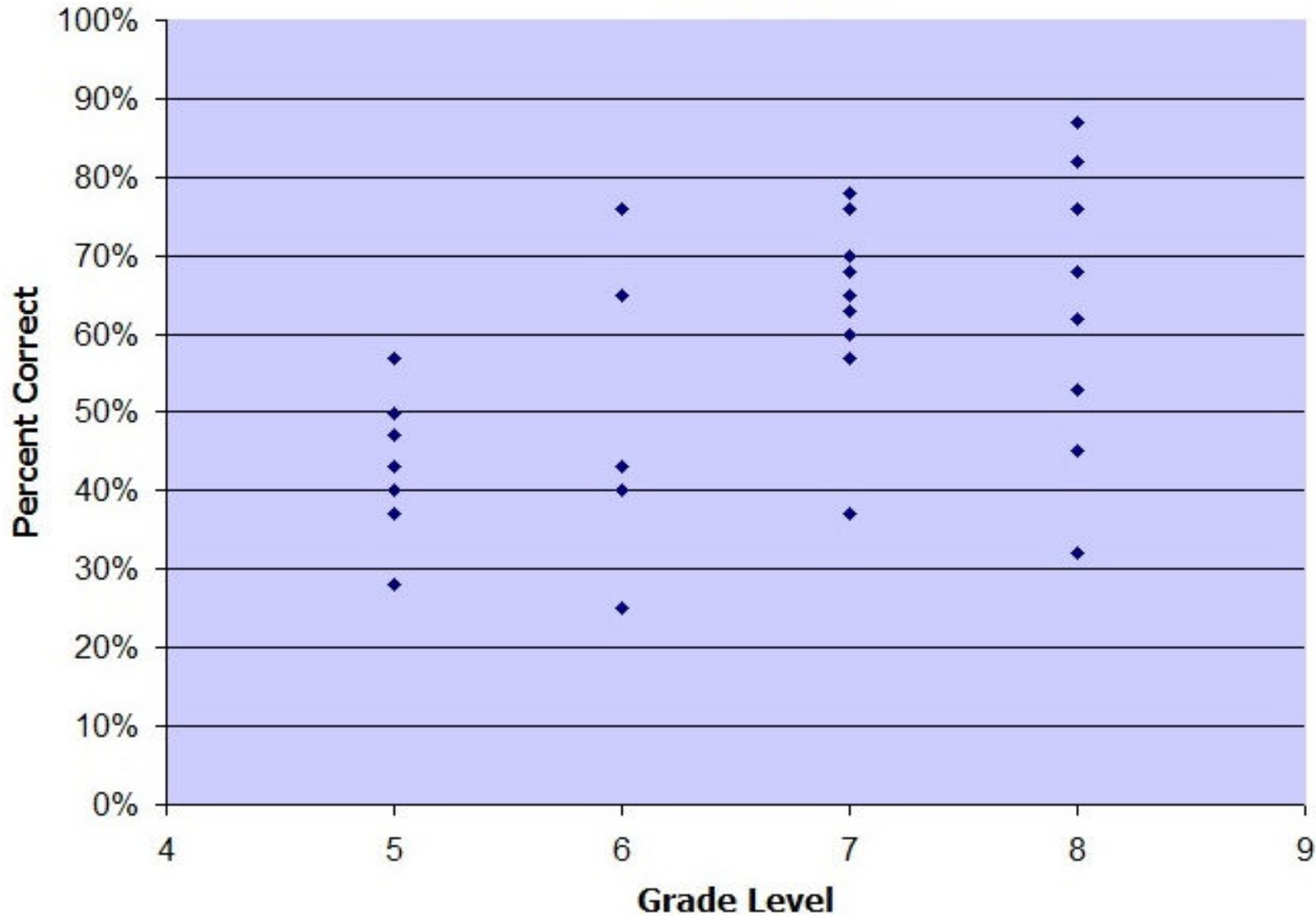
## Fall 2011 (before AWL focus)



# AWL Sublist 1 Assessment

Fall 2013 (After 2 AWL Years and a Summer)

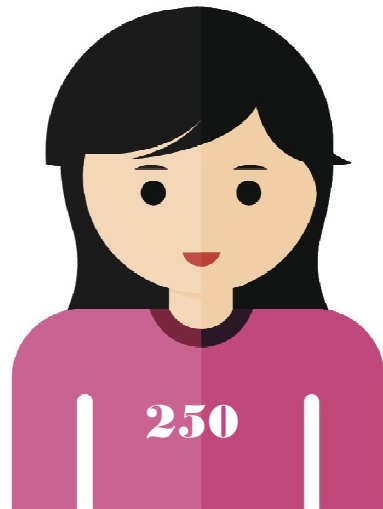
[6<sup>th</sup> Graders were new to Longsjo ESL]



# ELLs vs. High Achieving Peers



So you're telling me that there is actually a seventh grader in my homeroom who knows ALL the Academic Word List words? Yeah, right.



Viviana says that you have a really cool vocabulary test. Would it be okay if I took it?

Brianna scored 100% correct in five minutes.

# 2014 Spring ELA MCAS

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

- 5/8 of students scored proficient
- 88 median student growth percentile

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

- 4/5 of remaining students scored proficient. [others moved]
- 69 median student growth percentile

# Consistent ELA MCAS /AWL Correlation Over 3 Years



# 2015 PARCC

A humbling transition, but Longsjo ELLs did maintain higher student growth percentiles than any other student group.

Student Group	School									
	Included	Part.	% at Each					Trans.	Trans.	Incl.
	#	Rate	Level	L5	L4	L3	L2	L1	CPI	SGP
<b>Subgroups</b>										
High needs	329	97	3	23	35	26	12	70.8	35.0	316
Econ. disadvantaged	291	97	3	24	35	25	12	71.7	34.0	280
ELL/Formerly ELL	68	96	0	18	44	28	10	69.6	31.0	67
Students w/disabilities	91	93	0	10	23	36	31	55.0	39.0	89
Afr. Amer./Black	25	100	12	12	40	32	4	76.0	44.0	22
Asian	22	100	0	41	41	18	0	83.0	32.0	22
Hispanic/Latino	197	97	4	24	37	23	12	73.1	39.0	191
Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	40	98	0	33	28	23	18	66.3	27.0	39
White	133	97	7	32	32	21	8	77.4	35.0	127
Male	221	96	2	22	34	27	14	69.4	32.0	213
Female	196	99	8	34	36	18	5	80.4	42.0	188
Title I	417	97	5	28	35	23	10	74.5	36.0	401
Non-Disabled	326	99	6	33	38	19	4	80.5	35.0	312
Non-Econ. disadvantaged	126	98	8	35	33	18	6	81.0	42.0	121
ELL	43	96	0	12	37	40	12	60.5	45.0	42
Former ELL	25	97	0	28	56	8	8	84.6	20.0	25
Ever ELL	101	96	2	29	39	23	8	76.5	40.0	100
<b>All Students</b>										
2015	417	97	5	28	35	23	10	74.5	36.0	401



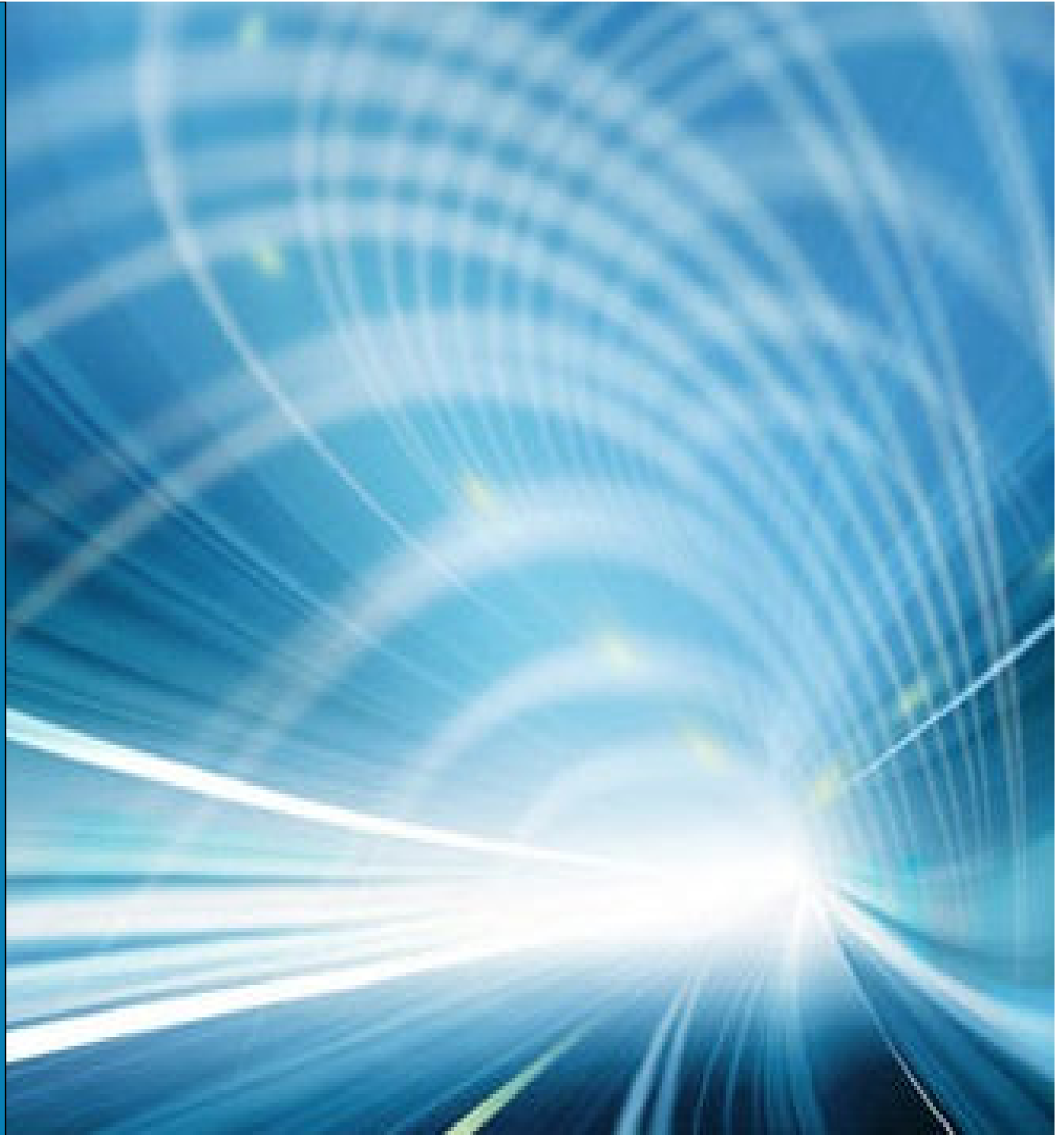
# Direct Instruction

Direct instruction of a small number of high-utility vocabulary words as students encounter them in authentic text is more helpful in improving reading comprehension than either teaching large numbers of vocabulary words from a list or workbook or spending instructional time on many of the low-frequency words typically highlighted in textbooks. (Lesaux, n.d.)

## **My issues with “research based” vocabulary programs.**

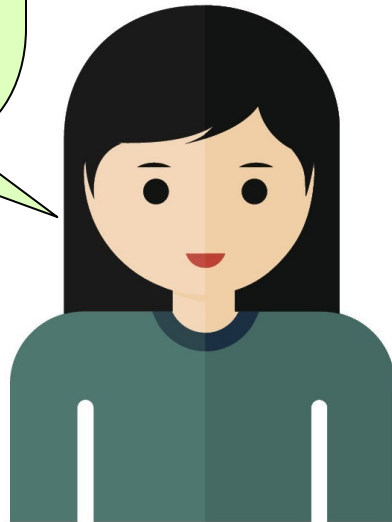
Sure, if you spend enough time on a set of words, you can usually demonstrate increased knowledge of those vocabulary items, at least in the short or medium term.

But what about all the words students miss learning through reading?



# Vocabulary Programs

Miss! This is torture. Can we **please** go back to just talking about the actual words that we actually read in the our actual articles?



- Most programs are incredibly boring and demotivating.
- They are disconnected from other learning.
- The opportunity cost of too much vocabulary work is a reduction in the time students spend **actually reading.**



# Preparation

- Paste text into online AWL highlighter
- Decide whether it makes more sense to pick a few words yourself, or let students identify the best words to learn more about.
- Prepare the visuals and set up the notebooks.

# For example

earth science

## Rise of the Jellyfish

### Are jellyfish taking over the world's oceans?

**W**orkers on a Japanese fishing boat struggle to haul up their net. There's something in it, but it's way too heavy to be fish. The fishermen pull the net to the surface and see hundreds of gigantic, squishy creatures with stinging tentacles. They're called Nomura's jellyfish—and they mean trouble.

A single Nomura's jellyfish can grow up to 2 meters (6.5 feet) wide and weigh as much as an adult gorilla. When the animals are caught accidentally, they can tear fishing nets or even sink boats.

Under the right conditions, these giant jellies can multiply quickly. Millions of them can suddenly appear in huge groups called blooms.

Nomura's jellyfish live only in waters around eastern Asia. But

#### words to know

**invertebrate**—animal without a backbone

**current**—a large stream of water flowing within the ocean

**overfishing**—catching so many fish that the fish population can't recover

**climate**—the average weather conditions for a region

**hemisphere**—one half of planet Earth

**BONUS SKILLS SHEET**  
Fact/Opinion Skill

**WATCH A VIDEO**

**PLAY A GAME**

Jellyfish like these sea nettles use their stinging tentacles to capture prey.





AWL highlighter

www.eapfoundation.com/vocab/academic/highlighter/

Apps FPS mkaustin1 RL AR X2 RCP RCP Google Advanced Weather New York Times Fitchburg Library Other bookmarks

# EAP FOUNDATION.COM

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## VOCABULARY

- Learning vocabulary
- Academic vocabulary
- General vocabulary
- Other vocabulary

Home Vocabulary Academic vocab

## AWL highlighter & gapfill

Find academic words in a text

Use this tool to highlight words from the **AWL (Academic Word List)**. Enter the text in the box below then click 'submit'. You may also like to try the **AWL tag cloud**, which is a companion to this page.

om contribute minimum distort  
secure factor bias form in  
**academic** income  
at focus justify virtual  
generate draft  
tistic hence whe

Internal links  
Related areas of this site  
To be added soon.

External links  
Other websites  
To be added soon.

Customise  
Change the way it looks

Submit Clear Select max number of characters 5000 (if processing speed is slow, choose a lower number)

The highlighted text will appear here.

AWL highlighter

www.eapfoundation.com/vocab/academic/highlighter/

Citation (MLA 7th Edition) Adams, Jacqueline. "Rise of the jellyfish: are jellyfish taking over the world's oceans? SuperScience Oct. 2014: 4+. General Reference Center GOLD. Web. 3 May 2015. URL http://go.galegroup.cc?id=GALE%7CA384439088&v=2.1&u=milin\_c\_fitcpl&it=r&p=GRGM&sw=w&asid=a13b7d35d46a1e720c1dd4 Gale Document Number: GALE|A384439088 Search Results Top of page Tools Citation Tools E-mail Download Highlights and Notes (0) Save Download MP3 More Sharing ServicesShare GO limit to this issue About Gener. Center GOLD Contact UsCopyrightTerms of UsePrivacy Policy

## Word lists

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Sorted by level

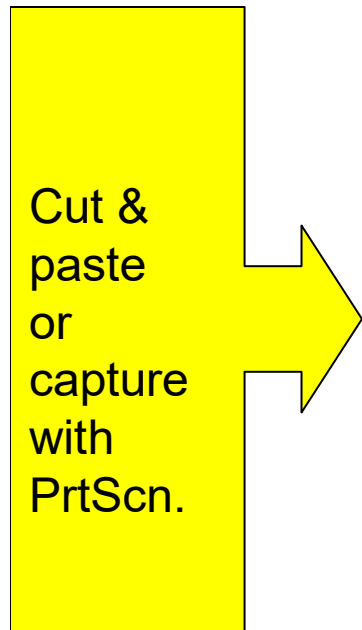
- Level 1** data definition definitions evidence issue method occur policy researchers responses similar source
- Level 2** concluded obtain region resource text
- Level 3** core document interact partner rely
- Level 4** cycle debating despite label overall
- Level 5** contact expand image monitor objective
- Level 6** accurate citation edition index recover tape
- Level 7** adult decades global survive
- Level 8** highlights
- Level 9** found team temporarily triggering
- Level 10** encounters

## Gapfill Maker

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Choose your flavour

Create a gapfill for the above text. Choose from these different types:





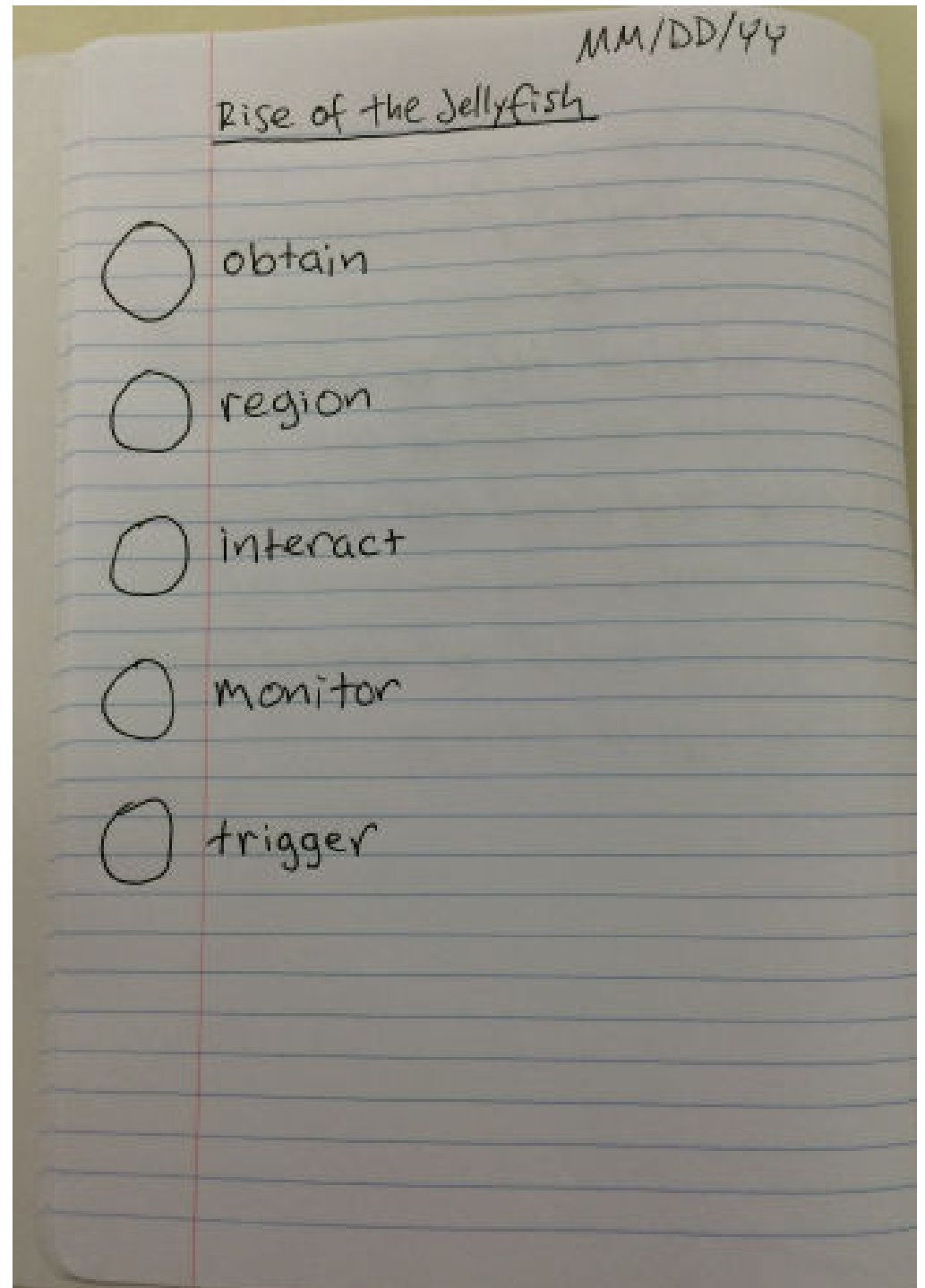
# Rise of the Jellyfish

## AWL Vocabulary Matches

- Level 1** data definition definitions evidence issue method occur policy researchers responses similar source
- Level 2** concluded obtain region resource text
- Level 3** core document illustration interact partner rely
- Level 4** cycle debating despite label overall
- Level 5** contact expand image monitor objective
- Level 6** accurate citation edition index recover tape
- Level 7** adult decades global survive
- Level 8** highlight highlights
- Level 9** found team temporarily triggering
- Level 10** encounters

# Set Up Student Notebooks

In this case, the teacher selected five key words from the AWL matches.



# Vocabulary Rating Scale

- 4** I know it well. I can explain what it means. I use it.
- 3** I sort of know it. When I see it, I usually understand it.
- 2** I've seen it or heard of it, but I'm not sure I know what it means.
- 1** No clue. I've never heard of it.

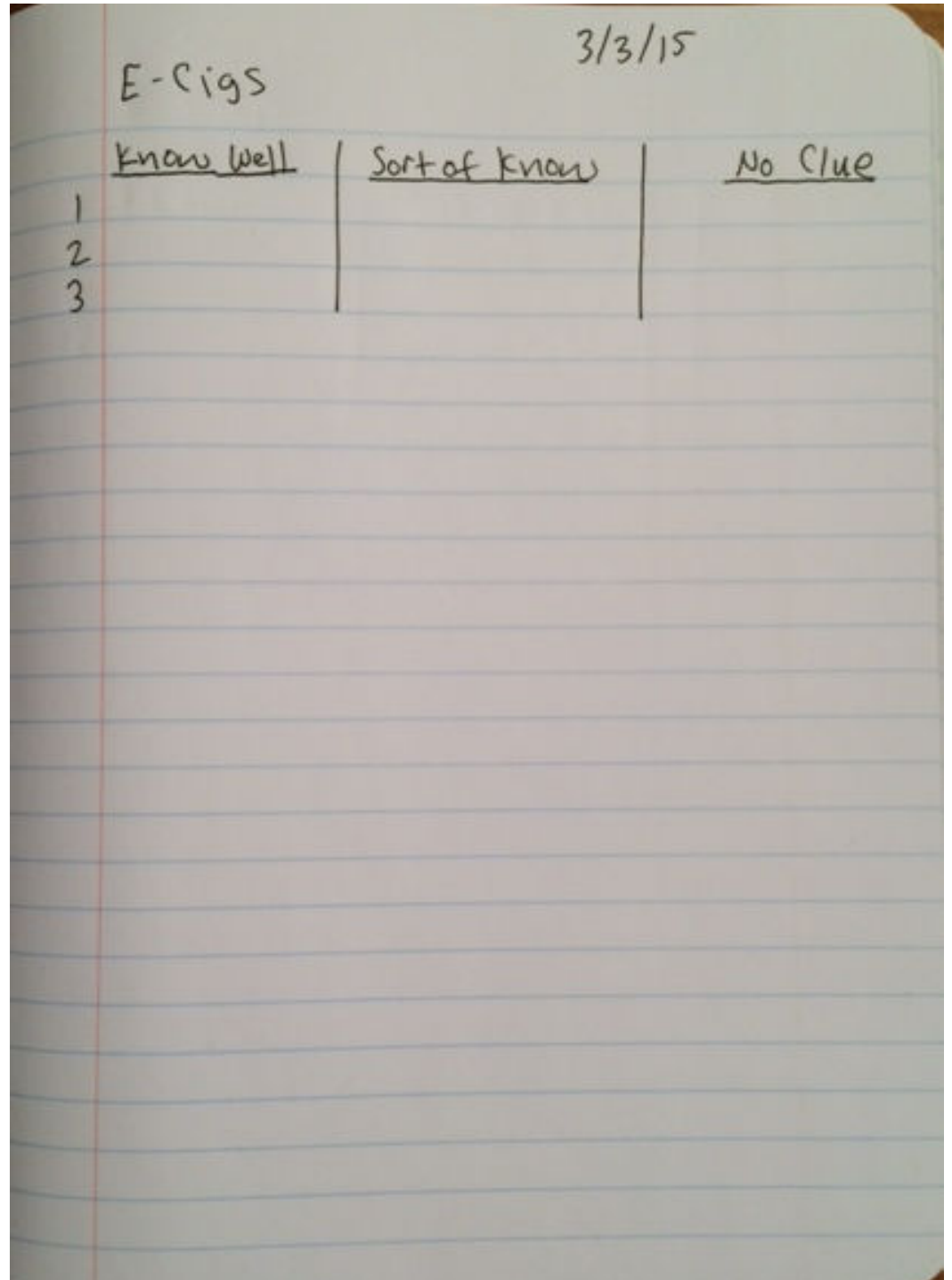
- Students assign a number to each vocabulary word based on their level of understanding. Circulate and decide which words are most problematic for the most students.
- Students share knowledge with classmates and build on each other's understanding. Tease out new meanings of multiple-meaning words. Add information as necessary.

# Or, let students pick

- Students should review a set of text matches from top to bottom. In other words, start with the highest frequency words.
- Somehow, three categories works better than four for this.

# Set Up Student Notebooks

- Circulate as students are doing this and observe.
- Decide on three words to teach based on what students write.
- There are often clear leaders in the “no clue” category.



# Vocabulary Teaching Tips

- Because AWL words are abstract and you also need to explain other vocabulary, stick to teaching only THREE per day.
- Offer and elicit multiple examples.
- Make students into experts on the words they do know and teach the others. Expand on what they say, but start with student voices.
- Minimize time spent writing. Students don't have to write down what they already know.
- Give student-friendly super-short definitions only. A synonym is best.
- Provide sentence frames.
- Have students share and confer orally.

# Vocabulary Resources

- Google images. Google images. Google images. Use pictures whenever possible.
- If you can't think of a good definition on the spot, quickly refer to the Wordsmyth.net Beginner's dictionary. It's great.
- Kinsella's *Academic Vocabulary Toolkit* is a good reference.



# Assessing Vocabulary Knowledge

- I **never** give grades. I think that any time which could be spent studying vocabulary is better spent reading.
- I think of correcting the assessment primarily as another opportunity for rich interactions with the vocabulary.
  - Do the assessment.
  - Check with peers
  - Check back with your notes.
  - Final check with whole class.

# A No-Prep Assessment

## Show what you know.

Define, explain, give a synonym, or use in a sentence.

1. design
2. feature
3. impact
4. potential
5. transfer

1. Have the students open to a blank page and number 1 to 5, skipping lines.
2. Without showing them this screen, read the words.
3. Project this screen so that students can check their spelling.
4. Students then write to show what they know.

# Quickie Quiz

Use Wordsmyth.net.

Be sure to use the Beginner's Dictionary.

**Instructions:** Complete these sentences using the words on this list.

- designed
- feature
- impact
- potential
- transferred

1. He has the \_\_\_\_\_ to be a great dancer.
2. He \_\_\_\_\_ an addition to his house.
3. The senator's speech on gun control had a great \_\_\_\_\_ on voters.
4. The best \_\_\_\_\_ of that house is the large kitchen.
5. We \_\_\_\_\_ our money to our new bank when we moved.

Q2 What does IMPATIENT mean?



Next ▶

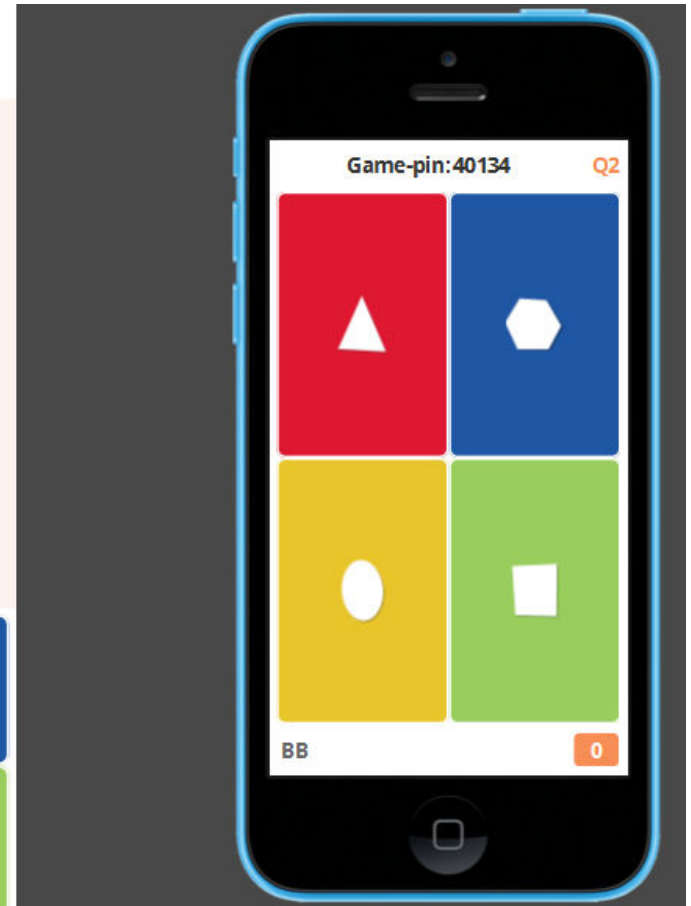
0  
Answers

▲ always waiting for others

⬠ does not like to wait

● likes to be with people

■ gentle and kind



# Kahoot!

For  
**Teachers**

<http://www.GetKahoot.com>

# Journal Writing

- Write journal prompts which ask students to use some or all of the AWL vocabulary as they reflect on the topic.
- Misperceptions about meaning and usage are thus easily identified.

# Mining for Vocabulary



# Topics

- Remaining focused on Academic Word List vocabulary enables me to be extremely flexible about topics.
- I often create units and lessons based on student interests. I take requests.
- The topics keep the students engaged in learning.



# Content is not the Objective

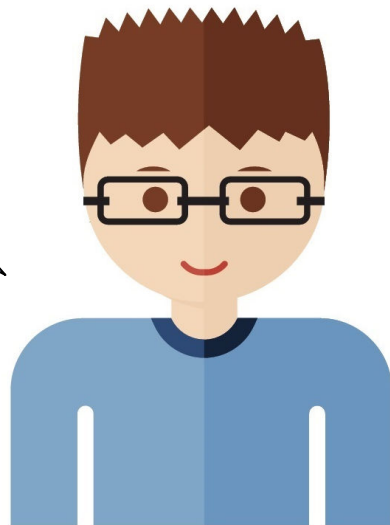
- Reading across a wide variety of topics provides background knowledge for future coursework across the curriculum.
- Everything is good to know.
- **BUT**, objectives are to demonstrate comprehension of texts rather than master content.

# Maximizing Comprehensible Input

- Many short readings with short writing assignments.
- A variety of short non-fiction texts exposes students to a wider range of vocabulary.
- Provides multiple rich exposures to AWL vocabulary items.

# Multiple Rich Interactions with Vocabulary

I feel like we just learned this word a few weeks ago. But I don't remember.



You have to forget a word a whole bunch of times before you finally remember it.



# Fostering Durable Gains

- I don't expect that every student gains mastery of a given word this week.
- I don't try to predict which student is in the position to forever retain a word I teach on a particular day.
- Each interaction may be just one of many rich exposures to vocabulary a student needs to master a word. That's good!
- Or, it might be an "ah ha" moment and they never forget it. Even better!
- I keep hitting my students **again** and **again** with high-utility Academic Word List vocabulary in context in authentic texts.

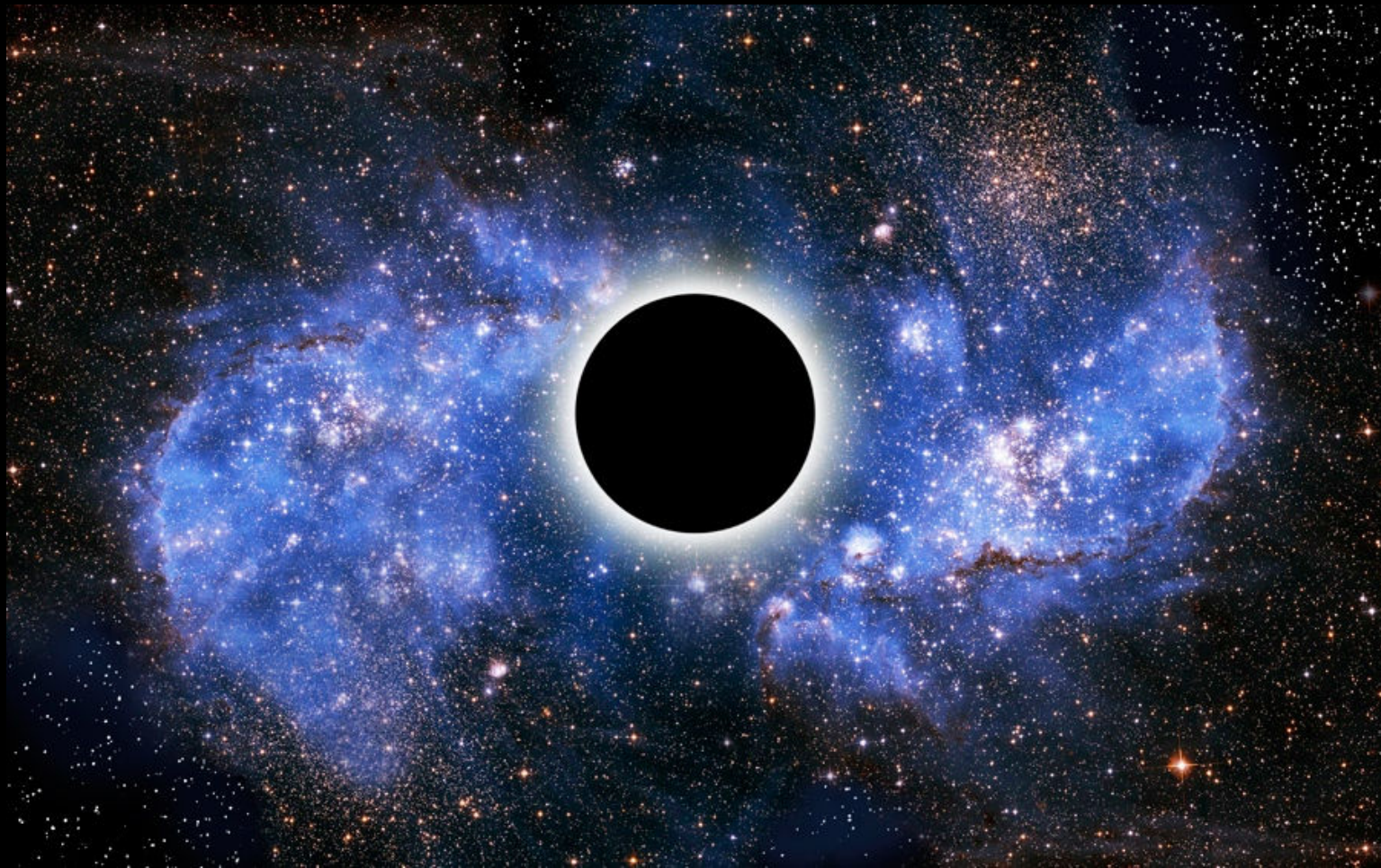






# 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

## The Black Hole of American Education





**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
READ  
NON-FICTION**



# Scholastic Magazines



- Common Core aligned assignments.
- Videos to bolster prior knowledge.
- Engaging.

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# Brain POP®

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**ABOUT US**



LESSON PLANS  
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**SUBSCRIBE**

Paste the quizzes into the AWL Highlighter.

Many good resources which feature academic vocabulary.

Individual articles and debates can work well on their own.

SERP | Word Generation

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word generation

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Details about the Curriculum

ORIGINAL MS PROGRAM

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ELL SUPPORTS

NEWS from Word Generation Schools...

BUILDING VOCABULARY VIA WORD GENERATION HELPS NYC STUDENTS ENHANCE THEIR DEBATE SKILLS

Read article:  
Usable Knowledge. Harvard Graduate School of Education's Web Resource for Connecting Knowledge to Practice.

Includes Documentary Video produced by NYC's Middle School Quality Initiative about Word Generation Saturday Debate Tournaments.

the use of controversial topics

academic vocabulary

proven approaches v. myths

ways to introduce new words

discussion and debate

academically productive talk

view complete WG lessons

tips and faq

previous presentations and papers

Word Generation is an innovative approach to academic language development for students in grades 4-8. Developed with the Boston Public Schools in 2007, SERP's original Word Generation program includes weekly units about controversial topics each with brief lessons for middle school teachers in all academic subjects. SERP has also recently created extended units of study about a variety of social studies and science topics. Fourth and fifth grade units are now available as well.

What was your favorite debate topic?



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What's New?

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Teacher Ideas Monthly May/June 2015 Issue

Morning Work

Weekly Reading Books

Leveled Reading Books

Cinco de Mayo

End of School Theme Unit

Create Puzzles

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www.edhelper.com/books/literature\_units.htm

Readings on a wide range of topics with multiple choice quizzes.

## Every Article At 5 Levels

Class reads the same content, but at a level that's just right for each student.

Newsela | Nonfiction Liter x


https://newsela.com/articles/?category=kids


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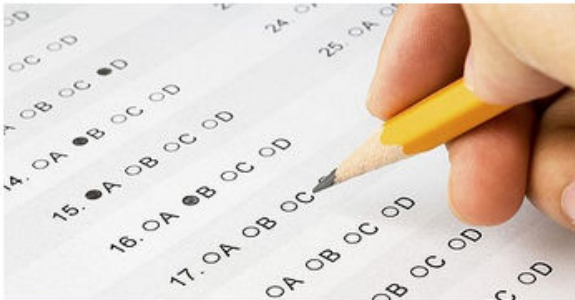
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Teen's plan to save and donate a few stray pencils, grows to thousands

  
KIDS 486  
04.29.15  
Small schools in Japan resist closing





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NEW! The Library now has subscriptions to 2 Genealogy websites. You can use Ancestry.com's library version here in the building, and users at home can use Heritage Quest to research census records, books and much more. You will need your library card number to use this handy link:

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Access to both these genealogy websites is funded by the Friends of the Fitchburg Public Library.

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### General Resources

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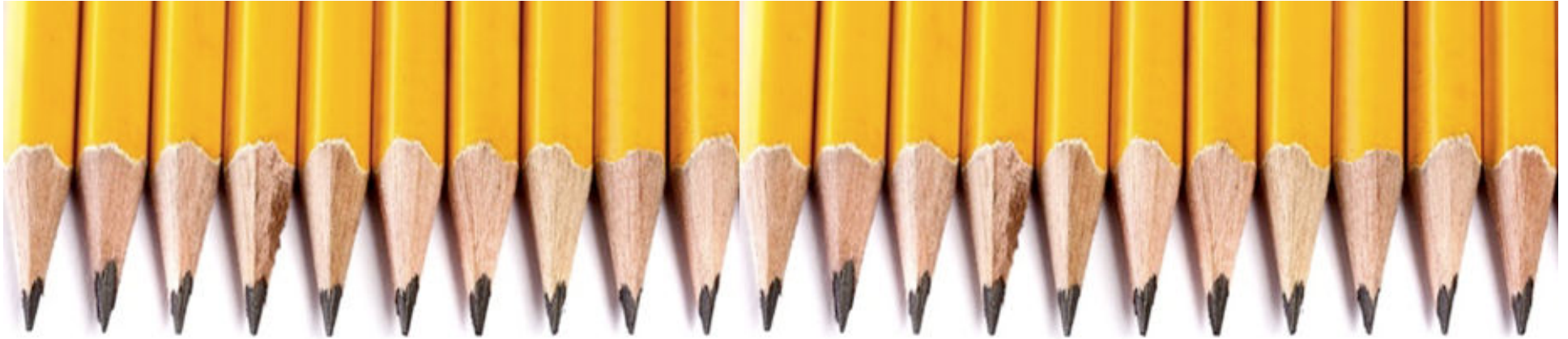
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# **Short Writing Assignments**

Tried and true.  
Work with virtually any non-fiction text.

# 4-3-2-1 Response

- 4 Key vocabulary words.
- 3 Facts you learned.
- 2 Questions you still have.
- 1 Opinion you have.

# 3-2-1 Response

**3** Facts you learned.

**2** Questions you still have.

**1** Opinion you have.

# 20 Word Gist

1. Read the article.
2. Answer the 5Ws and H with the most important information.

**Who**

**What**

**Where**

**When**

**Why**

**How**

3. Write a 20-word GIST.

Adapted from  
ReadWriteThink:

**Get the GIST: A  
Summarizing Strategy  
for Any Content Area**



**Thank You!**

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austinm@fitchburg.k12.ma.us

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