

Teaching Key Vocabulary

To teach KEY vocabulary words, try this five-step process:

1. The teacher defines the word.
2. The teacher draws a picture to represent the word.
3. The students write a definition in their own words.
4. The students draw a picture to represent the word.
5. After instruction, students revisit the picture to refine, add, or change it as necessary.

You will not be able to use this strategy for every new word. If you tried that, you would never have time to teach anything else. Instead, concentrate on the key vocabulary terms that the students will find in many different contexts or that are crucial concepts to the lesson or unit.

This strategy comes from *Classroom Instruction that Works*, by Robert Marzano. It is especially helpful for English learners to draw a representation of a word as well as provide a written definition. When students draw a picture for a word without a written definition, the student may forget how the drawing was supposed to represent the word, making it difficult to recall the meaning of the word at another time.