

EXPLICIT VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION DURING SHARED STORYBOOK READING



GOOD WORDS TO TEACH

Shared storybook reading is an excellent context for teaching new words to young children. To make the most of instructional time, it is important to choose the best targets to teach with brief, explicit instruction. Here are three steps for selecting good words to teach.

1. Choose **new** words.

- New words are words that children don't know yet, but that children are ready to learn. Often, these are words that are more sophisticated synonyms for words or ideas that children already know.
- Good choices: *clever, whisper, curious, sprint.*
- Poor choices: *puppy, birthday cake, run, big.* (Most preschoolers already know these words!)

2. Choose **useful** words.

- Useful words are likely to show up again
 - In conversation with adults
 - In other classroom settings
 - In other books
- Useful words are helpful at home and in school
 - For talking about life
 - For understanding what's going on
- Example: *whisper*—you would want to know what your teacher meant if she told you to “whisper in the hallway”. Other good choices: *disappointed, thrilled, speedy, explore.*
- Poor choices: *auditorium, mammoth, distraught, masterpiece.* (These are interesting words, but they aren't very useful.)

3. Choose words that you can **teach well**.

- Storybook context or illustration gives information about the word.
- Words that can be defined with a simple definition.
 - Examples: *disappointed* means sad; *thrilled* means excited, *speedy* means really fast, *explore* means look around a new place.
- Words that have many child-friendly examples.
 - Examples: A child might feel *disappointed* because he didn't get a turn in a game or because she wanted to play outside and it was raining. Child-friendly examples for *speedy* could be a rocket ship, or a race car, or a child who runs really fast.
- Poor choices: *mesmerized* and *distance* can't be defined simply and it is hard to think of child-friendly examples.

Examples of words that are new, useful, and can be taught well to young children.

curious	escape	exhausted	greet
precious	soaked	swift	brave
disappear	lonely	clever	worried
discover	agree	explain	ignore
examine	fearless	frolic	magnificent