SOCIAL STUDIES
Building Academic Vocabulary

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OKLAHOMA ACADEMIC STANDARDS
VI. Building Academic Vocabulary for the Social Studies

Overview
This manual is designed to help school districts or individual schools systematically enhance the academic vocabulary of their students to better prepare them to learn new content in mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies. The research and theory underlying the recommendations made here have been detailed in the book Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement (Marzano, 2004). Briefly, though, the logic of such an endeavor is that the more general background knowledge a student has about the academic content that will be addressed in a given class or course, the easier it is for the student to understand and learn the new content addressed in that class or course. Unfortunately because of a variety of factors, including differences in the extent to which experiences at home help enhance academic background knowledge, for students transferring from one school to another or one district to another, and so on, there is typically great disparity in the academic background knowledge of the students; and this disparity increases as students progress through the school years. However, if a district (or school) were to systematically ensure that all students were exposed to specific academic terms and phrases across the grade levels, this would form a strong foundation for all students.

How to Teach the Terms and Phrases
There is no single best way to teach terms and phrases. However, the research and theory on vocabulary development does point to a few generalizations that provide strong guidance.

Initially Provide Students with a Description, Explanation, or Example as Opposed to a Formal Definition
When introducing a new term or phrase it is useful to avoid a formal definition—at least at the start. This is because formal definitions are typically not very “learner friendly.” They make sense after we have a general understanding of a term or phrase, but not in the initial stages of learning. Instead of beginning with a definition, it is advisable to provide students with a description, explanation, or example much like what one would provide a friend who asked what a term or phrase meant.

Have Students Generate Their Own Descriptions, Explanations, or Examples
Once a description, explanation, or example has been provided to students they should be asked to restate that information in their own words. It is important that students do not copy exactly what the teacher has offered. Student descriptions, explanations, and examples should be their own constructions using their own background knowledge and experiences to forge linkages between the new term or phrase and what they already know.

Have Students Represent Each Term or Phrase Using a Graphic Representation, Picture, or Pictograph
Once students have generated their own description, explanation, or example, they should be asked to represent the term or phrase in some graphic, picture, or pictographic form. This allows them to process the information in a different modality—in imagery form as opposed to a linguistic form. It also provides a second processing of the information which should help deepen students’ understanding of the new term or phrase.

Have Students Keep an Academic Vocabulary Notebook
One of the basic assumptions underlying the approach outlined in this manual is that over time students will develop an understanding of a set of terms and phrases that are important to the academic content in mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies. This implies that the terms and phrases that are taught using this approach represent a related set of knowledge that expands and deepens from year to year.

To facilitate this cumulative effect it is highly advisable for students to keep an “academic vocabulary” notebook that contains the terms and phrases that have been taught. Enough space should be provided for students to record their initial descriptions, explanations, and examples of the terms and phrases as well as their graphic representations, pictures, and pictographs.

Space should also be provided for students to write additional comments about the terms and phrases as time goes on. As mentioned in the next section, students should be engaged in activities that allow them to review the terms and phrases in their academic vocabulary notebooks and add to their knowledge base regarding specific terms and phrases. As these activities occur, students can be asked to add to the entries in their notebooks perhaps correcting misconceptions, adding new information, or making linkages with other terms and phrases. Ideally, all terms and phrases are kept in one academic notebook that has a “tab” or divider for each subject area. This would allow students to make comparisons between terms and phrases from different subject areas. The academic notebook might also have a tab or divider entitled “my words.” In this section students would record terms and phrases of interest gleaned from their own reading experiences in or outside of school.
Periodically Review the Terms and Phrases and Provide Students with Activities That Add to Their Knowledge Base

If students experience a new term or phrase only once, they will be left with their initial, partial understanding of the term or phrase. To develop deep understanding of the terms and phrases in their academic vocabulary notebooks students must be engaged in review activities. Once a week or perhaps more frequently, students might be offered activities that add to their knowledge base about the terms and phrases in their notebooks. For example, they might make a comparison between selected terms in a given subject area or between subject areas; they might create analogies or metaphors for selected terms; they might simply compare their entries with those of other students. Finally, they might be engaged in games that use the terms and phrases from their academic vocabulary notebooks. After each of these activities students should be asked to make corrections, additions, and changes to the entries in their notebooks. In this way, students’ knowledge of the academic terms and phrases might deepen and become a sound foundation on which to understand the academic content presented in class.

“I LIVE IN A SMALL HOUSE, BUT MY WINDOW LOOKS OUT ON A LARGE WORLD.”

CONFUCIUS, CHINESE PHILOSOPHER
Suggested Social Studies Domain Specific Basic Academic Vocabulary

**Early Childhood**
Pre-Kindergarten
- citizen
- rules
- responsibilities
- family
- class
- school
- United States flag
- symbol
- country
- pledge
- allegiance
- food
- clothing
- shelter
- Earth
- United States of America
- map
- globe
- Oklahoma
- history
- holidays
- traditions
- past
- today
- tomorrow
- yesterday

**Kindergarten**
- citizen
- rules
- responsibilities
- family
- class
- school
- flag
- symbol
- country
- pledge
- allegiance
- flag etiquette
- needs
- wants
- food
- clothing
- shelter
- Earth
- Oklahoma
- history
- customs
- traditions
- holidays
- today
- tomorrow
- yesterday

**Lower Elementary**
Grade 1
- heroes
- government
- laws
- national anthem
- historic figures
- character traits
- fairness
- respect
- stewardship
- environment
- courage
- equality
- commitment
- common good
- economics
- consumers
- producers
- urban/city
- rural/country
- cardinal directions
- north
- south
- east
- west

Grade 2
- citizenship
- individual rights
- liberties
- freedom
- constitution
- president
- congress
- The Star Spangled Banner
- interdependence
- trade
- public services
- map legend
- intermediate directions
- latitude/longitude
- hemisphere
- landforms
- bodies of water
- mountains
- natural features
- political map
- physical map
- states
- honesty
- patriotism
- capitol
- court
- timelines

Grade 3
- governor
- legislature
- Oklahoma State Seal
- Oklahoma flag
- scarcity
- surplus
- choices
- goods
- services
- tourism
- fossil fuels
- agriculture
- environment
- relative location
- direction
- scale
- map title
- map legend
- directional indicators
- The Five Tribes
- Plains Indians
- Native Americans
- cowboy
- historic sites
- American culture
- African Americans
- Spanish-speaking groups
- natural resources
- spatial distribution
- industry
- manufacturing
- transportation
- communication
- global trade
- irrigation
- European explorations and settlements
- New World
- cooperation
- conflict
- cultural exchanges
- territory

Grade 4
- geographic features
- physical features
- cultural features
- political features
- economic features
- historic features
- absolute location
- major river drainage systems
- region
- boundaries
- state capitals
- major cities
- free immigrants
- indentured servants
- labor systems
- representative government
- the House of Burgesses
- self-government
- sectional identities
- compact
- triangular trade routes
- Middle Passage
- forced migration
- enslavement
- social classes
- 13 British colonies
- revolution
- boycotts
- massacre
- protests
- coercive
- intolerable
- inalienable rights
- consent of the governed
- social contract
- diplomatic events
- grievances
- confederation
- independence
- civil unrest
- compromise
- constitution
convention
The Preamble
three branches of
government
separation of powers
checks and balances
shared powers
ratification
a bill of rights
Manifest Destiny

**MIDDLE LEVEL**

**Grade 6**
population pyramids
cartograms
map projections
mental mapping
cultural diffusion
physical regions
rainforest
cultural regions
indigenous peoples
economic regions
political regions
metropolitan areas
immigration
natural disasters
climate
cultural diffusion
market economic system
command economic system
political systems
authoritarian
democracy
republic
economic interdependence
balance of trade
supply and demand
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
population density
push and pull factors
developed countries
developing countries
literacy rate
life expectancy
per capita income
arable soil
urban sprawl
conservation
commercial/subsistence
agriculture
sustainability
renewable/non-renewable
resources
deforestation

**Grade 7**
geographic perspective
satellite imagery
industrial corridor
multinational organizations
political stability
plate tectonics
monsoon-typhoon-tsunami
religion
cultural region
ethnic heritage
infant mortality rate
imports/exports
supply/demand
under-population
one-child policy
conventional/nuclear war
humanitarian relief
apartheid
genocide
desertification
cultural trait
absolute monarchy
dictatorship
terraced farming

**Grade 8**
 imperial policies
ideological
propaganda
natural rights
neutral
alliance
petition
assembly
constitutional principles
popular sovereignty
federalism
judicial review
amendment
sectionalism
spirit of nationalism
free states/slave states
common man
states’ rights
nullification
plantation system
rebellion
annexation
popular sovereignty
arsenal
Underground Railroad
abolitionist
suffrage
movement
civil war
secession
Total War Strategy
emancipation
proclamation
assassination
reconstruction
radical
Jim Crow laws
sharecropping

**HIGH SCHOOL**

**Economics**
economic reasoning
choice
opportunity cost
cost/benefit analysis
risk/reward relationship
incentive
disincentive
trade-off
produce
factors of production
land
labor
capital
entrepreneurship
shortages
surpluses
price floors
price ceilings
competition
allocation
self-interest
economic issues
labor unions
corporations
not-for-profits
private property rights
invest
money supply
interest rates
inflation rates
poverty
government assistance
programs
unemployment
Consumer Price Index (CPI)
The Federal Reserve
fiscal policy

**Oklahoma History and Government**
prehistoric cultures
expeditions
mercantile
removal
Freedmen
reservation system
boomer/sooner
allotment
lottery
tribal communal lands
single statehood
state constitution
county government
city government
tribal government
state government
revenue
initiative petition/
referendum
socialism
race riot
boom and bust
depression (economic)
migration
Okies
New Deal
jazz
civil disobedience
equal protection
desegregation
lunch counter sit-ins
integration
self-determination
joint jurisdiction

**Psychology**
behavioral psychology
psychoanalytical psychology
cognitive psychology
humanistic psychology
vocational psychology
counseling psychology
industrial psychology
clinical psychology
experimental psychology
educational psychology
ethical issues
quantitative research
strategies
qualitative research strategies
sensory processes
consciousness
physical development
social development
emotional development
moral development
cognitive development
cognition
principles of motivation
and emotion
bias
discrimination
stereotypes
psychological disorders
abnormal behavior
anxiety disorders
personality disorders
mental health

Sociology
theorists
sociological research
methods
cultural transmission
nature versus nurture
subcultures
cultural diversity
social status
social order
social groups
norms
mores
taboo
primary groups
secondary groups
social institutions
societal values
familial values
religious values
educational values
economic values
political values
rites of passage
ethnocentrism
collective behavior
pop culture
counter culture
xenophobia

United States Government
limited systems
representative democracies
constitutional government
reserved powers
concurrent powers
expressed powers
minority rights/
majority rule
presidential cabinet
term limitations
legislative process
executive actions
judicial interpretation
necessary and proper clause
landmark cases
political parties
interest groups
public opinion
popular will
rule of law
electoral process
nominative process
fiscal/monetary policy
regulatory
domestic policy
foreign policy
human rights
civic virtue

United States History
industrialization
philanthropist
Americanization
nativism
assimilation
muckrakers
temperance
civil rights
imperialism
insurrection
diplomacy
military interventionism
neutrality
isolationism
lynching
court injunction
speculation
installment
laissez-faire
sit-down strikes
socialism
communism
appeasement
interment
proliferation
containment
spheres of influence
arms race
détente
superpower
scandal
executive powers
terrorism

World Human Geography
regionalization
census data
patterns of composition
demographics
human capital
voluntary and involuntary
migrations
acclimatization
assimilation
cultural landscapes
social mores
nation-states
territoriality
Neolithic Revolution
Green Revolution
commercial agriculture
generic modification
sustainable development
deindustrialization
economic restructuring
suburbanization
edge cities
megacities
global cities