

## Strategies for Studying vocabulary and Spelling words:

Ruddell, M.R., & Shearer, B.A. (2002). "Extraordinary," "tremendous," "exhilarating," "magnificent": Middle school at-risk students become avid word learners with the vocabulary self-collection strategy (VSS). *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 45, 352-363.

- Providing a rationale or a reason for knowing a word adds to the understanding of the process for learning them.
- Students can build their vocabulary knowledge through active participation in "word discussions" and activities related to word learning.

**Flash cards:** write words on one side and definitions on another. The cards can be used independently to quiz or to use for word sorting and matching games. Draw pictures or use symbols to aid with definitions.

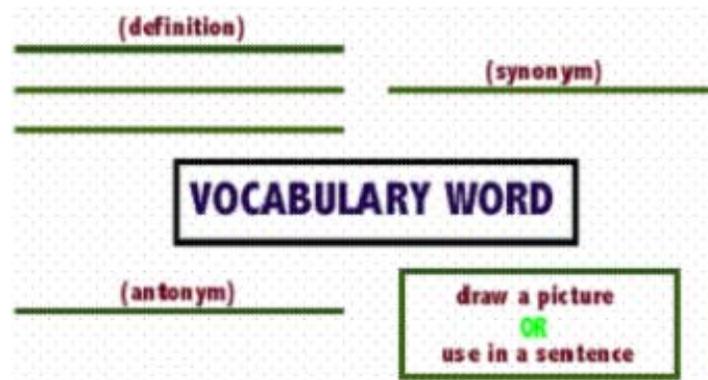
**Word Structure:** Sometimes a word can give clues to the meaning in its structure. Analyzing the word's structure and **properties** is a vocabulary strategy that you can use to figure out the word's meaning. When you approach an unknown word, you can guess at its meaning by breaking down the parts of the word such as roots, prefixes, compound words, pronunciation and syllables.

**Word sorts:** study the definitions and spelling patterns and try to make relationships among the words. Sort or group words by first letter, prefix, suffix or root, meaning, or by part of speech.

## Word mapping:

A vocabulary word map is a graphic organizer that helps you think about new words or **concepts** in several ways.

To build a word map, start by entering the new word in the middle of the map. Then, fill in the rest of the map with a definition, **synonyms**, **antonyms**, and a picture to help illustrate the new word. See the example below.



Visual Imaging: When you use visual imaging, you think of a word that either looks like or sounds like the word whose meaning you are trying to learn. Thinking of the picture of the look-alike word and/or image will help you remember the word and its meaning.

Contextualizing: This means putting new vocabulary words into sentences to help you remember them and to test if you are using them correctly. Try using the words in your everyday conversations and look for the words while you read and watch television. Personalizing the words and writing down why the vocabulary item (i.e. the word or phrase) is important to you or where you first saw it helps to remember something new.

**Technology:** Typing words in a word processing program will self correct and help you with learning to spell the words.

<http://www.flashcardexchange.com/> You can create your own flashcards

<http://dictionary.reference.com/> Use this site to find alternate meanings or investigate synonyms in the online Thesaurus

**Manipulatives:** use games such as scrabble or cut out letter tiles to practice spelling patterns. Share you ideas about the word as you play.

**Make a Study Plan:** You need to have experience with a new words 4-8 times before your brain commits it to memory. Practicing words 5-10 minutes every night is better than studying the words 30 minutes the night before the test. Here is a suggestion for a study plan

Monday: make flashcards and study

Tuesday: play a matching game with cards

Wednesday: complete a word sort

Thursday review for test. Have someone read the definitions and practice writing the words down

