

Word Study Rationale

Many English teachers have had difficulty meaningfully teaching vocabulary.

However, teaching vocabulary certainly does not have to be hard, something simply done out of perceived necessity to fill time, or something that induces busy work. There are over 1,000,000 words in the English language. Old-fashioned methods of vocabulary instruction have involved teachers assigning lists of 15 (or so) words, having students research definitions of these words, having students write them within sentences, and eventually quizzing them on the words' meanings.

Such an approach is futile as retention of such words' meanings is sure to be relinquished once the next list is introduced. Plus, there is never enough time, considering the amount of words that exist in the English language, to meaningfully impact students' reading, writing, and communication skills when utilizing this method.

Word studies attempt to introduce a way for students to organically and routinely acquire new words that they are ready to use. This method attempts to teach words in relation to their families; sets of words that are not just related to one another but also related to words students already use comfortably as a means to improve students' working vocabulary.

The amount of words high school students can recognize and understand far outweighs the amount of words they write, speak, and 'get by' with on a daily basis—otherwise known as their working vocabulary. This method believes the best way to rapidly and meaningfully improve students' vocabulary; and therefore, their reading, writing, and communication skills; is to harness as many words as possible from this 'aware of' category and transfer them to the 'working' category.