Six Steps for Effective Vocabulary Instruction

The importance of robust vocabulary knowledge for reading comprehension and general literacy development has been recognised for decades (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005). Children with large vocabularies are able to more quickly understand new ideas and concepts and have a greater ability to understand what they have read. Explicit vocabulary instruction is an effective and important intervention to support vocabulary development (Mutia et al., 2023).

Keywords: *vocabulary, instruction, comprehension, understanding, communication*

Marzano's Six-Step Process for Vocabulary

Marzano developed a six-step process for building students' vocabulary through direct instruction. The six steps are outlined below:

Step 1 – Explain The teacher provides a student-friendly description, explanation, or example of the new term.	A 'student-friendly' description, explanation, for example, might look like: Bizarre: *"Bizarre means that something is very unusual or odd. For example, if your teacher came to school dressed as a scuba diver, that would be bizarre."*
Step 2 – Restate Students restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words.	Students can use a notebook or personal dictionaries to write down their own definitions of words.
Step 3 – Show Students find or construct a picture, symbolic or graphic representation of the term.	Bizarre:

Step 4 – Discuss The teacher engages students in vocabulary discussions or activities that add to their knowledge and refine their understanding of the term.	Discussions should: • Use words that the are already known and understood to extend understanding • Refine students' understanding by providing further examples of the word • Call on students to discuss their own examples of the word and create new ones • Encourage students to support their peers' understanding of the word
Step 5 – Refine and Reflect Students return to their own definitions of the term and discuss and refine their descriptions, explanations and examples.	Students write another definition of the word below their picture or graphic in their books. This might be more structured and refined, for example: Bizarre: *"Unusual, odd, very strange and unexpected"*
Step 6 – Apply in Learning Games Involve students in games that allow them to play with the term and reinforce word knowledge.	Examples of vocabulary building activities and games: • Hangman • Crossword • Word association • Word search

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Contact: 1300 881 763 or **hello@languagedisorder.org.au**

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