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INTEREST IN  
CORWIN

Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Word Study That Sticks* by Pamela Koutrakos.

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# Yep! Maybe . . . Huh?

## Grades K–2, Lesson 2

### WHAT?

It is important to make sure students know what the words being studied mean before they begin to look at what the word looks like, what it sounds like, or how it is spelled.

### HOW?

1. Gather students.
2. Hold up each word being studied in the cycle, one at a time.
3. Each time you hold up a word, ask students to think about their understanding of the word.
4. If they know it and can use it, it's a YEP. If they heard it and recognize it, but perhaps can't use it, it's a MAYBE. If they don't know what a word means, it's a HUH.
5. Make three piles as you hold up words—one for YEP, one for MAYBE, and one for HUH.
6. Review all the MAYBE and HUH words together as a class.

*Note:* In the kindergarten launch, cards are usually pictures, often with the same starting sound. Phonemic awareness continues to be supported.

### WHY?

- To learn the meaning of words (there is no sense in learning to spell words we can't use!)
- To model self-assessment of prior knowledge and reflection of understanding
- To provide essential background knowledge and kick off multidimensional word learning in a cycle of instruction

### YOU NEED

- Teacher- or publisher-created word cards (one for each word being studied in the cycle). I often write words on index cards and keep them filed to use year to year. Other

teachers make a Google Slides or PowerPoint presentation in which each slide is a new word to “flash” on the screen so all can see.

### TIPS

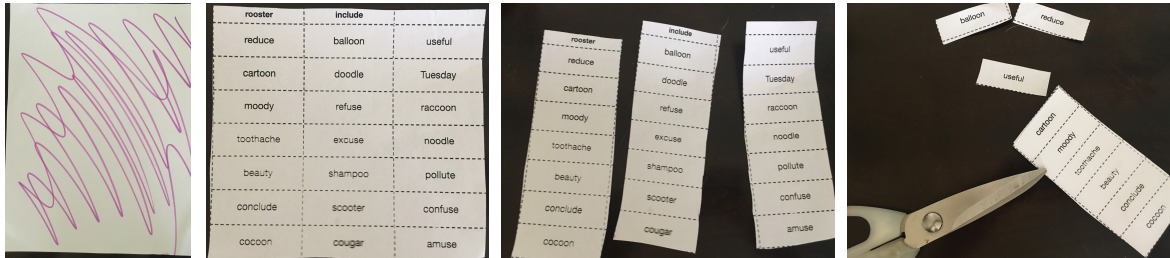
- If even one student feels it is a MAYBE or HUH, put it in that pile. There's no harm in making sure everyone has a complete understanding.
- Students will need modeling to know how to distinguish between a YEP, MAYBE, and HUH. In the early weeks, you will want to model this process using tons of think-aloud.
- Some students may feel embarrassed to take the risk and share that they do not know what a word means, so I also suggest taking the lead and model being comfortable by adding a word to the MAYBE and HUH piles so that this becomes seen as a sought-out learning opportunity.
- Some teachers like to teach actions to symbolize each rating. For example, a thumbs-up or a nod for a YEP, a thumb to the side or the sign for maybe (like a palms-up seesaw) for a MAYBE, and a thumbs-down or shaking of the head for HUH. Others like to have mini dry-erase boards handy so students can jot and hold up the words *YEP*, *MAYBE*, or *HUH*.



MAYBE and YEP done with a small group.

# Cut, Not Styled

## Grades K–2, Lesson 3



### WHAT?

If you are using sort cards in your word study instruction, students need to learn to cut out their words in an efficient way. Keep in mind that sorting is a high-level thinking routine and many literacy gurus with diverse word study philosophies agree sorting is considered a “best practice.”

### HOW?

1. Explain that students will be using word cards with the teacher and also with small groups, partners, and independently. To use these cards, students will need to be prepared.
 

*Step 1:* Five-second scribble on the back.

*Step 2:* Picture frame—Cut along the border (the rectangle around all the words).

*Step 3:* Columns—Snip top to bottom in each column.

*Step 4:* Singles—Gather all columns together. Place on top of one another. Cut rows.
2. Model this start to finish. Model again, having select students “dip in” to help you. Have all students try, using one copy of the selected words. Go one step at a time, modeling and narrating the process as students work.
3. Provide a second set of words and try again—this time more quickly and independently.

### WHY?

- To practice fine motor skills, listening routines, following multiple-step directions,

cutting words quickly, not perfectly (so that time is spent on studying and working with words, not cutting them).

- To make sure we, as teachers, spend our precious time on more important work than cutting sorts each week.

### YOU NEED

- Many sets of words cards (same words introduced in the previous lesson) copied and ready to go
- Scissors and crayons
- Ziploc baggies or manila envelopes, labeled with student names (put word cards inside)
- Partially prepped chart that can be added to “in the moment” with students and hung to serve as a teaching tool for students in the coming weeks.

### TIPS

- Assign each student in a group (or let them choose) a different color. Students in the same group do a “five-second scribble” with different colors. This is *their color* from now on. When a word card falls to the floor, the owner can check the color and grab it.
- Remind the students that this is word study, not art class. We are aiming for OK and separate, not perfect. Model this. Yes, K–1 students can do this with proper modeling.

# What Do You Think?

## Grades K–2, Lesson 4

### WHAT?

The more connections we provide between a word and diverse contexts, the more likely students will add these words to their speaking, listening, reading, and writing vocabularies.

### HOW?

1. Gather students to an area where a large set of word cards (being studied this cycle) are posted. These will serve as a visual reminder of the words being discussed.
2. Pose a scenario using a word and ask students which makes more sense. For example, if the word *wag* was being studied, a teacher may ask, “Would a dog **wag** its tail when you walk in the door after being gone all day or when it was sleeping? What do *you* think?”
3. Students turn and talk with a partner and tell their response using a *because* statement. Listen in on a couple of different partner conversations each time, informally checking for student understanding and coaching (not fixing) as needed. An example of a response is, “I think a dog would wag its tail when I walked in the door *because* dogs usually wag their tail when they are excited. Dogs are usually excited when their owners come home.”
4. Encourage students to use the word, speak in full sentences, and when ready, ask a question back to their partner or add on to build a conversation instead of doing an “I go–you go” share.

### WHY?

- To build speaking and listening skills
- To get students thinking about the meaning of words being studied

- To support the addition of new words to student vocabularies

### YOU NEED

- Large word cards (or projected words)
- Prepared scenarios for using the words in different contexts

### TIPS

- Hold up the targeted word or point to the word with a pointer as you use it. Make an implicit connection to the way the word looks and sounds, and what it means.
- Post sentence frames for early readers—for instance, *I think . . . because . . .* to help them speak in full sentences.
- Once students are comfortable with taking turns and speaking in full sentences, teach them to end by asking their partner a question, such as *Do you agree or disagree?*
- In time, teach students to repeat what their partner said before sharing their own ideas—for example, *I heard you say you think . . . I agree/disagree because . . .*
- Next, teach students to “add on”—for example, *To add on, I also think this because . . .*
- Create new sentence stems to model, practice, and post for visual reminders. Build up s-l-o-w-l-y, but continue to work on this language.
- This language is being taught and practiced in a high-scaffold, whole-group setting with the intention of transferring it to small-group and partnership talks with greater confidence and competence. Talk is a *huge* part of word study learning. We need to teach talk as much as we need to teach the different areas of word study.

# Word Introductions: None to Some

## Grades 3–6, Lesson 2



Photo by Linda Day

### WHAT?

It is important to make sure students know what the words on their list or in their sort mean before they begin to look at what the word looks like, what it sounds like, or how it is spelled.

### HOW?

1. Gather students.
2. Hold up each word being studied in the cycle, one at a time.
3. Each time you hold up a word, ask students to think about their understanding of the word and hold up a number of fingers that shows their understanding of and ability to use the word. Zero fingers = *I've never even heard of this word.* Five fingers = *I know this word so well I could teach it.*
4. Review all the words that are not a 5 for even one student.

### WHY?

- To learn the meaning of words (there is no sense in learning to spell words we can't use!)
- To model self-assessment of prior knowledge and reflection on understanding
- To provide essential background knowledge and kick off multidimensional word learning in a cycle of instruction

### YOU NEED

- Word cards (one for each word being studied in the cycle). I often write words on index cards and keep them filed to use year to year. Other teachers make a Google Slides or PowerPoint presentation in which each slide is a new word to “flash” on the screen so all can see.

### TIPS

- When in doubt, review it. Make sure everyone has a complete understanding of each word.
- Use student-friendly language in your definition of a word. Provide context for when and how a word might be used. Make sure contexts and references are relevant and accessible for all students.
- I first learned the 0/5-fingers routine by visiting classrooms: A third-grade teacher I knew used a “fist to three” approach, and a fifth-grade teacher I knew used a “fist to five” approach. Like everything recommended here, tweak practices to make them work for you/your class!

# Backwards Scattergories

## Grades 3–6, Lesson 3



### WHAT?

Students learn words by using them. Making connections between words not only demonstrates high-level, creative thinking, but it also explores multiple contexts in which words might be associated.

### HOW?

1. Gather students. Ask if anyone has ever played the game Scattergories. Tell students that in word study, we play Backwards Scattergories. We put words we are studying into categories based on their meaning, and our partner guesses what they have in common and what category all the words gathered fit into.
2. Use the words introduced in Lesson 2 to group a few words together (based on their meaning, *not* the way they look or sound). Have students try to guess what group/category the selected words belong to. Repeat with a new group of words.

3. Send students off to create additional categories using the same set of words.
4. After an appropriate amount of time, have students work with a partner to see if a partner can guess the similar thread between words.
5. Close by sharing a few favorites as a class.

### WHY?

- To have students see word study as playful and fun
- To create connections between words
- To think about and use the meaning of words

### YOU NEED

- A teacher set of word cards and a pocket chart *OR* a smaller student set and a document camera
- Student sets of word cards
- Word study notebooks

### TIPS

- Pre-prepare your categories before starting.
- Create an interactive bulletin board display for the whole class to try out some particularly challenging or impressive Backwards Scattergories in their free moments. “Can I Stump You?” and “Look How Many Words I Included!” might be nice headers. Students can decorate and post their most thoughtful groupings so others besides their partner can play.



Learn more about the book this lesson is from: <http://bit.ly/2xYsNgn>