

Creating a Vocabulary Notebook

To set up your student's Vocabulary Notebook, divide a spiral notebook into 26 sections (one for each letter of the alphabet), allowing two or three pages per letter. Read "Improving Vocabulary Skills" in *Writers INC*.

It's best to keep vocabulary separate from the Unit Portfolios, because many of the new words your student will learn along the way will not be specific to the thematic unit. Vocabulary Notebook pages can be helpful for students not only to observe their progress, but also to establish an increasing awareness in reading. Research has shown that it is much easier to remember words in context than in simple lists. Computer option: students can also keep their vocabulary words in a file on the computer.

Each day, students should make a vocabulary list of unknown words found while reading. At the end of the reading, students will be expected to make vocabulary entries into their notebooks. If the student does not come across any new words, choose new words from the "Vocabulary" section of the current unit study. The student should arrange the entries as follows:

1. Write the date of the entry next to the word.
2. Include the sentence where you first found the word.
3. Write the definition of the word from context.
4. Write the antonym of the word as derived from context.
5. Write one complete sentence using the word.

Example

intact – (7/9/00) "The deck was torn and scattered, but the precious engine was intact."
"The Lawgiver" p. 239.

Definition: unharmed, untouched.

Antonym: destroyed, torn apart.

Sentence: I was pleased to find my house intact after the tornado warnings had passed.

Root Words

Students should study word roots. Many English words have Latin roots. When a student learns one root, he/she can often learn many new words. For example, the Latin root "tele" means "to distance," and this root is found in many English words, such as the following: telephone, telescope, etc.

Review

Once a week, verbally go over a random list of words. Ask the student to use each word in a sentence. Check off the words that the student masters. Review all words at the end of the semester.