Reading Strategy—DECODE VOCABULARY
Some Suggestions

<u>*Goal*</u>*: To help students decode words to better comprehend the meaning of sentences.*

Decoding Vocabulary …

1. Allows readers to identify vocabulary that is new;
2. Addresses the meanings of content-specific terminology;
3. Helps readers to address vocabulary that may have multiple meanings.
4. It is IMPORTANT…
   o To have copies of alternative levels of text for as much of the curriculum as possible;
   o To provide students with regular opportunities to practice reading fluency in non-threatening setting;
   o To connect new words with prior knowledge and broader content instruction;
   o To provide frequent opportunities for vocabulary repetition and use, rather than a stand-alone activity or assignment;
   o To reinforce vocabulary acquisition as a strategic skill that can be applied to new words in new circumstances;
   o To regularly integrate vocabulary into class discussion and content instruction.

Tools for DECODING VOCABULARY…

- See the **Vocabulary Analysis Activity**. This tool can be used for individual students and groups of students to consider the full meaning of a key content vocabulary term (e.g. courage, conservation, freedom)
- See the **Traffic Light Activity**. This tool is used for students to self-assess their understanding of Tier 2 terms. (The need for clarification of Tier 3 terms is evident. They are technical, new vocabulary for students.) Tier 2 terms are often misunderstood in the context of the instructional unit and require attention and clarification through class discussion.

Adapted from "Reading to Learn"—The Vermont Strategic Reading Initiative 2004

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Vocabulary Strategies
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What words do we teach?

Isabel Beck has categorized words into three categories—or Tiers. These tiers serve as a 'helpful lens through which to consider words for instructional attention." *(Beck 2002)*

Tier One consists of the most basic words—*clock, baby, happy*—rarely requiring instruction in school.

Tier Three includes technical words whose frequency of use is quite low and is often limited to specific content –*isotope, peninsula, democracy*. These are vocabulary words most often addressed through content instruction.

Tier Two words are high-frequency words that are used in everyday communication. However, many of these words have multiple meanings and because of this are often challenging for students in any content domain—*base, courage, measure, explain, justify, reflect.*

Because Tier Two words are in a unique category, AND we infrequently address the meanings of these terms during content instruction, it is recommended that we give them some attention in our science and social studies classrooms.

Criteria for identifying **Tier Two** Words
- ***Importance and Utility***: Words that are characteristic of mature language users and appear frequently across a variety of domains.
- ***Instructional Potential***: Words that can be worked within a variety of ways so that students can build rich connections to other words and concepts.
- ***Conceptual Understanding***: Words for which students understand the general concept, but provide precision and specificity in describing the concept.

How Do We Choose Vocabulary for Instruction?

Level	Definition	Example
Tier One *Useful*	Most basic words; rarely require intentional instruction	*water, pencil, plan, food*
Tier Two ***Important for clear communication***	Words of high frequency for mature language users; found across a variety of areas	*measure, explain, base, free, courage*
Tier Three ***Difficult, content-specific***	Words of low frequency of use; often specific to an area	*photosynthesis, fiber, laissez-faire, radiation, prey*

Beck, Isabel et al. Bringing Words to Life. London: The Guildford Press. 2002

Vocabulary Analysis Activity

1. Read the excerpt from _____.

2. Select 6 *Tier Two* and 3 *Tier Three* words from the selected passage.

3. Write them below, and discuss with a partner why each is necessary to comprehending the article.
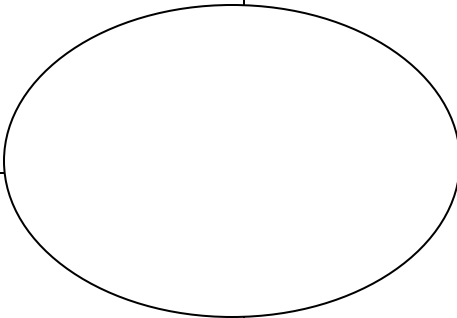
Tier Two Words	**Tier Three Words**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	
_____	
_____	

4. Select one word from your list to use with the following activity.

Beck, Isabel et al. Bringing Words to Life. London: The Guildford Press. 2002

Let's REALLY Know This Word!
Frayer Model

Definition (own words)	Characteristics of this Concept

Examples	Non-Examples

Beck, Isabel et al. Bringing Words to Life. London: The Guildford Press. 2002