Sequential Vocabulary

Understanding words is necessary for success in every discipline. Learning to identify and define word parts empowers a student to unlock the meaning of unfamiliar words. This process teaches a life skill rather than memorization of definitions.

A lesson plan for grade 8 English Language Arts  By Valerie Hendricks

Learning outcomes: The students will identify and define prefixes through association of familiar words.

Time required for lesson: 1 hour

Materials/resources

• any text that approaches the study of vocabulary by the teaching of word parts, such as *The Word Within the Word*, volumes one and two, by Michael C.L. Thompson
• dictionary with etymology
• word list worksheet for each student

Pre-activities

• Ask students to try to paraphrase the following sentence which appeared in *The News and Observer*: “The officials at RDU will collaborate on the minutia of repatriating the refugees from Kuwait.”
• Wait a few minutes. Tell the students to identify the words that they are having difficulty defining.
• Define the following word parts for the students:
  o col-: together or with
  o ate-: make or cause
  o mini-: small
  o re-: again
  o patri-: country
  o fug-: flee
• Ask them to try again to paraphrase the sentence. The purpose of this pre-activity is to establish a need to learn.

Activities

1. Give each student a copy of the word list worksheet.
2. Have students brainstorm two association words that include each prefix. You may pair students.
3. As a class, have students compare their association words. The teacher writes these association words beside the prefixes. Students may give some
inappropriate association words which the teacher will have to eliminate and explain why the word does not work.

4. Have students identify the definition of the prefix based on the word associations. As a class, compare the definitions. Use the word list key to clarify the definitions of the word parts to make sure that the students have the correct definitions.

Assessment: Graded activities or teacher-made test

Extension

Vocabulary illustrations

On a sheet of paper, have each student write an association word including one of the prefixes and label the definition of the prefix. Have the student illustrate the word’s meaning by drawing a picture. Make these colorful and display them in the classroom as reminders of the prefix definitions and association words.

Flash cards

Have students make a flash card for each of the prefixes in the lesson. A student writes an association word on an index card using markers. It is a good idea to write the prefix and the rest of the word in different colors. For example, for the word “precede,” “pre” would be written in red and “cede” would be blue. On the back, write the definition of the prefix and the definition of the association word. At least one flash card should be produced for each prefix in the lesson. Students may want to see how many different association words they can think of to use for flash cards. These cards may be used for class or individual review.

Creating a story

Have students use 15-20 association words containing prefixes from this lesson to compose a story. The story may be silly or serious. If possible, you may want to relate the assignment to literary works or writing concepts you are teaching.