Vocabulary & Reading Comprehension

Vocabulary size is one of the strongest predictors of reading **comprehension ability**.[1]

Children need to learn at least:

2 new words per day in 1st and 2nd grade

6–8 new words per day from 3rd grade onward.[2]

Adequate reading comprehension requires readers to **already know 90%–95%** of the words in the text.[3]

Readers who **comprehend most of what they read** tend to read more and have an easier time learning the meaning of words from context.[4]

Actively processing new words improves student reading comprehension more than passively receiving word definitions.[6]

Even brief vocabulary instruction, as little as one minute per word, right before or during reading **improves reading comprehension.**[5]
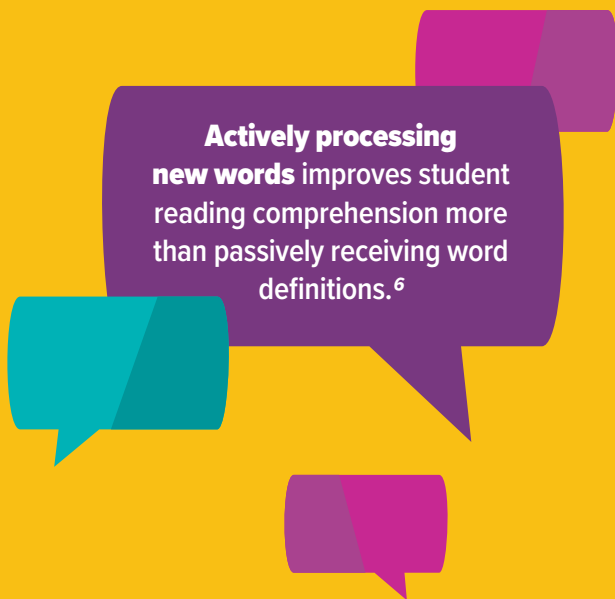
Students should experience new words in **multiple modalities**:

speech

text

games

...accompanied by images, and in a variety of contexts.[7]

Different tasks require different levels of **processing depth**:

Greatest Depth: Generating a novel response, like using the word in a new sentence

Medium Depth: Understanding the meaning, like providing an antonym

Limited Depth: Memorization, like matching the word to its definition[8]

New words are best learned in the context of what students are **already reading and studying**, rather than in isolation.[9]

Play games with the words. Games reinforce learning. Actively processing vocabulary words in multiple ways stores information in multiple memory systems, enabling the brain to access the information with multiple triggers or cues.[10]

Footnotes:

1. Ricketts, Nation, & Bishop, 2007, and Sénéchal, Ouellette, & Rodney, 2006, as cited in Wright & Cervetti, 2016
2. Biemiller; Nagy & Anderson https://www2.ed.gov/programs/reading first/2008conferences/language.pdf
3. Nagy & Scott, 2000
4. Hirsch, 2003; Nagy, 2005, as cited in Wright & Cervetti, 2016; Stanovich, 1986
5. Wright & Cervetti, 2016
6. NICHHD, 2000; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986; Wright & Cervetti, 2016
7. Rasinski, Padak, & Fawcett, 2010
8. Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986, as cited in Wright & Cervetti, 2016
9. Rasinski, Padak, & Fawcett, 2010
10. (Sprenger, 2010) http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/113040/ chapters/What-Does-the-Research-Say-About-Vocabulary¢.aspx.

Vocabulary A-Z

Vocabulary A-Z is a digital solution for helping K–5 students build vocabulary and increase reading comprehension. With Vocabulary A-Z, teachers can differentiate vocabulary instruction and practice with premade and customizable word lists, printable and digital lessons, and online game-based activities and quizzes that students love!