

## Using Mnemonics to Teach Vocabulary Words

**Objective:** To acquire new English vocabulary words, keywords, and definitions using mnemonics instruction

### Setting and Materials

Setting: self-contained classroom

Materials:

1. 24 English vocabulary words (i.e., 20 target words and four examples)
2. 22 cm x 28 cm cards containing a keyword, meaning of vocabulary word, and drawing of keyword and its meaning

### Content Taught

*List of Vocabulary Words, Keywords, and Definitions*

Vocabulary word	Keyword	Definition
1. Raven <sup>a</sup>	Raisin	Blackbird
2. Marmalade <sup>a</sup>	Mama	Jam
3. Popover <sup>a</sup>	Pop	Muffin
4. Brooch <sup>a</sup>	Broom	Fancy pin
5. Piggin	Pig	Bucket
6. Dorado	Door	Fish
7. Sopor	Soap	Sleep
8. Dogbane	Dog	Tropical plant
9. Pyrene	Pie	Stone
10. Peavey	Pea	Hook
11. Lamia	Lamb	Devil
12. Gossoon	Goose	Boy
13. Goatee	Goat	Small beard
14. Tarn	Tar	Lake
15. Dahlia	Doll	Flower
16. Ranid	Rain	Frog
17. Mundungus	Moon	Tobacco
18. Bugsha	Bug	Money
19. Penna	Pen	Feather
20. Corsair	Core	Pirate
21. Birling	Beer	Game
22. Carline	Car	Witch
23. Fanon	Fan	Cape
24. Bunnia	Bun	Salesman

<sup>a</sup>Sample items

### Teaching Procedures

1. Tell students they will be learning some new vocabulary words and will be given a short quiz on the words at the end of lesson.

2. With first two sample items listed above (i.e., raven and marmalade) teach students keywords for the two sample items (i.e., raisin and mama)
3. Next, use interactive pictures for the two sample items (i.e., blackbird and jam) to explain to students how to use the steps to recall information for the two sample items
4. Provide a practice quiz using these two examples
5. After the practice quiz on the two sample items, teach students keywords for the 10 target items (e.g., ranid = rain) by reading the list of vocabulary items and keywords listed above
6. Have student complete a test of keyword recall with the 10 target items (e.g., ranid = ?)
7. After teaching the 10 target words, present student with each interactive picture for 30 seconds and describe picture and its meaning during this time (e.g., “The word clue for ranid is rain, and ranid means frog. Remember this picture of a frog in the rain.”)
8. After providing each description, question student once on picture description and the meaning of vocabulary word.
9. After completing these steps for all 10 target words, give student a vocabulary test by asking student the meaning of each of the 10 words and record student responses verbatim.

### **Evaluation**

Score student responses as follows:

1 point recorded if response is exact or a close synonym (e.g., “rock” for “stone”)

½ point recorded if response is either a partial definition or a broader or narrower definition (e.g., “man on a ship” is said for “pirate”)

0 points recorded if response is incorrect or no response is given

### **Lesson Plan Based on:**

Scruggs, T. E., Mastropieri, M. A., & Levin, J. R. (1985). Vocabulary acquisition by mentally retarded students under direct and mnemonic instruction. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency, 89*, 546-551.