

Classroom Best Practices: Teaching Vocabulary Terms and Phrases

ANTICIPATORY SET:

1. What does the term “jargon” mean?
2. Why is understanding technical vocabulary an important part of a job?
3. How can learning vocabulary words help students be successful in school and later in life?

OVERVIEW:

“Vocabulary terms and phrases” is one of the major categories of instructional content in any subject-matter area. Research indicates that there is a strong, direct relationship among vocabulary and intelligence, the ability to understand new information, and a person’s level of income. Some studies indicate that vocabulary instruction is one of the most important instructional practices teachers can use in the classroom, especially with low-achieving students. Vocabulary instruction is important across all grade levels, but the most significant achievement gains occur with secondary students. Research findings indicate that teacher instruction of new words and phrases increases the chances that students will understand the words when they read them later. Teaching vocabulary also improves a student’s understanding of new material.

GUIDELINES FOR USE:

Some general guidelines for teaching terms and phrases to improve student learning include:

- Make sure the terms taught relate to the lesson covered
- Select a limited number of key terms (no more than 10-15) for any lesson
- Define the critical terms in the lesson
- Supplement term definitions with pictures

RECOMMENDED PROCESS:

For each new term:

At the beginning of the lesson:

- STEP 1: Give students a brief definition (in words)
- STEP 2: Show students a picture that illustrates the definition

During instruction:

- STEP 3: Have students come up with a unique definition
- STEP 4: Have students draw a unique picture to illustrate their definition

Throughout the lesson:

- STEP 5: Check student understanding



EXAMPLE 1: Architectural Rendering Lesson – Vocabulary Handout provided to students at the beginning of the lesson. Teacher shows other drawings using defined rendering techniques. As students apply the rendering techniques, the teacher should use questioning strategies to find out if students know which techniques are being used (this can be done individually or as part of a review process).

Basic Rendering Techniques



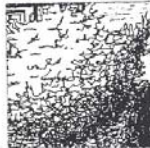
STIPPLING – Uses uniform “dots” or points to create various forms and values.



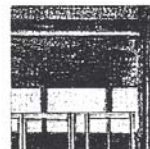
CROSS HATCHING – Employs a series of vertical, horizontal, **and** diagonal lines spaced at various distances from one another to create a range of values.



PARALLEL LINES – Use of vertical, horizontal, **or** diagonal lines spaced at various distances from one another to create various forms and a range of values.



RANDOM LINES – Use of curvilinear lines in a variety of directions and of a range of densities to create various values.



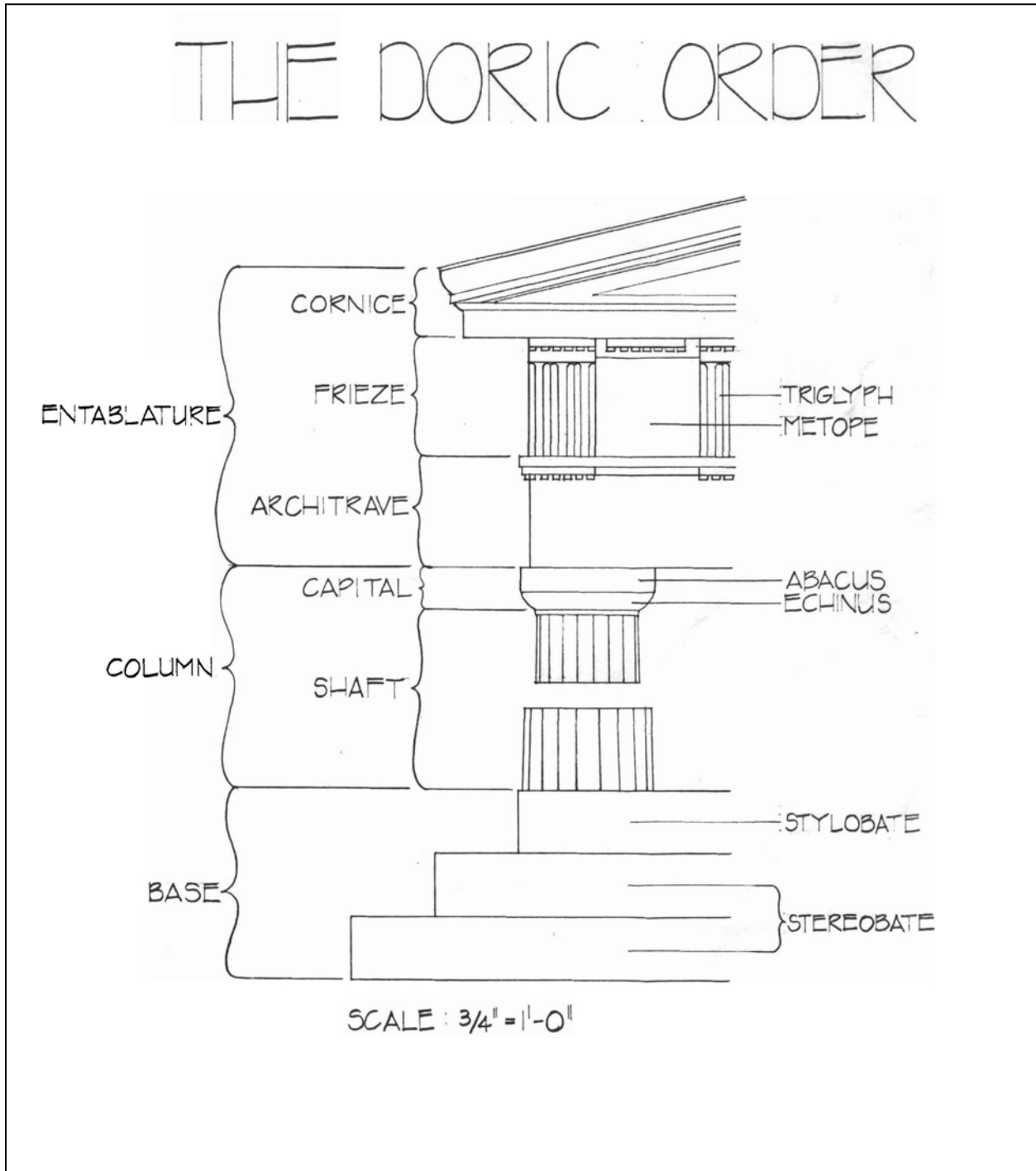
SHADING – Uniform application of lead to create “solids” in a range of values.



RUBBING – Similar to shading. Use of texture beneath or within the drawing surface to create “semi-solids” in a range of values.



EXAMPLE 2: Greek Architectural History Lesson – Vocabulary Handout provided to students at the beginning of the lesson. Definition of each building element is provided verbally by teacher. Students redraw and label the building section as part of the lesson activities. Require students to use these terms when describing parts of buildings during class discussions and/or reviews.





EXAMPLE 3: Architectural Introduction to Model Building Lesson – PowerPoint shown to students at the beginning of the lesson. Brief definitions are provided verbally by the teacher as each actual tool is displayed and identified in front of the entire class. Require students to check out tools for use during class time and use the proper name when requesting the tool.

Model Building Tools



- X-acto knife
- Sand paper
- Cutting mat
- Elmer's glue
- Metal straight edge
- Pencil
- Large drafting triangle
- Parallel bar/t-square
- Beam compass/large circle template
- Architect's scale
- Vinyl eraser



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Architectural Drafting - Introduction to Model Building

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VOCABULARY HANDOUT

Term/Phrase	Definition	Picture

Term/Phrase	Definition	Picture

References:

Primary reference:

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Review Questions:

DIRECTIONS: Select one, best answer for each of the questions below. Mark your answers (A, B, C, D, or E) in the spaces provided:

- _____ 1. According to research, which of the following is a benefit of teaching vocabulary in the classroom?
- A. Increased understanding of new material
 - B. Significant achievement gains among secondary students
 - C. Word recognition in future reading
 - D. Increased intelligence
 - E. All of the above
- _____ 2. Research proves the best way to teach vocabulary is?
- A. Select words that are not related to the lesson content
 - B. Have students look up words they don't know as they encounter them in learning
 - C. Use visual images and words to define key terms
 - D. Select 20-30 words to teach per lesson
 - E. None of the above
- _____ 3. Which of the following statements is true about checking student understanding of vocabulary words?
- A. Teachers should always give a vocabulary quiz at the end of a lesson
 - B. Students should have the freedom to define vocabulary words in their own words without any corrective feedback from the teacher
 - C. Teachers need to make sure students possess an accurate understanding of vocabulary words
 - D. Students should only define the words they say they don't know
 - E. All of the above

Review Questions – Answer Key:

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