

Extension activity: a) using these words, create short sentences, and possibly write them down. b) write a text comprising at least 5 or more words from this collection. Mark the words in red (this is a variation of the skeleton stories in #4).

- **Word collections related to a picture**

(kindergarten – upper level):

As a starting point, the picture must have many details. It could relate to a theme which is currently dealt with in class, i. e. a poster about the country of origin or a picture of a playground. For middle and advanced levels, it could involve a picture or photograph which requires specific vocabulary. As a class or in groups, the students describe the picture (using nouns, verbs, adjectives), writing them on post-it strips which are attached to the picture or board. Variant: first, students label and write down individually what they know, and then compare and exchange their labels with others. In order to assimilate the new terms, a writing assignment should follow. Example: describe the picture in as much detail as possible/ write a story to accompany the picture/ put yourself into the role of someone in the picture and describe the picture from their perspective (“I am the woman in the yellow sweater. I am standing in the centre. Behind me is...”).

- **Word field connected to the topic of a writing assignment**

(middle – upper level):

When students have writing assignments with a clearly defined theme, such as “If I were a farmer”, “the political system of our country” etc.), it is a good idea to work previously (in class or in groups) and apply in practice the collected important vocabulary, phrases and expressions (nouns, verbs, adjectives) before they actually begin to write. This collection of relevant words and phrases for the topic also reduces the pressure on students in terms of content and orthography. Students can create and then compare these word fields individually, in pairs or groups. Clusters and mind-maps are ideal for this assignment. See #8.

2. Expanded language tools (sentence beginnings, text-specific phrases, etc.)

2nd–9th grade

20 minutes



The method of collecting with the students not only words, but also expanded language elements orally and in writing in preparation for certain writing assignments is a valuable contribution for the expansion of their expressive competence. The establishment of such a list is mainly known from speaking assignments (i. e. useful phrases for discussions) , but is equally useful in connection with writing tasks. The selection of language elements depends on the actual writing assignment, as seen in the following examples:

- Before reporting about an experience (vacation, trip, adventure, etc.): find various beginnings of sentences, in order to avoid the common overuse of “and then” ...:



Before writing the text, it is a good idea to orally practice concrete examples. In the writing assignments, students are then instructed to use at least three of the sentence beginnings from the list.

- Before beginning a descriptive task (describing a picture or a landscape), students should collect location identifiers, places, positions, with the appropriate prepositions (“in front of the house stands...”, “in the background I can see...”, “above the mountains...”, or possibilities to express one’s feelings (“I like particularly...”, “I think it is nice that...”, “I don’t quite understand why...”, “I could imagine that the artist...” etc.
- Before writing a text in which, for instance, the advantages and disadvantages of life as an immigrant are considered, a great variety of phrases should be collected to express one’s feelings in a more nuanced way than just “I think...”, such as: “I believe that...”, “In my experience...”, “In my view...”, “In my perspective...”, “I am convinced that...”, “I doubt that...” etc. Here as well, it is recommended that students first practice these expressions orally. In their subsequent writing assignments, they should then have to apply at least three of the phrases from the collected list.

15

Suggestions for vocabulary building II: working with gap-fill exercises and alternative word tests, etc.

Goal

In contrast to the suggestions referenced in #14, the following are more structured with very clear guidelines.

1. Texts with gap-fill exercises

1st – 9th grade

15 minutes



Materials:
Prepared gap-fill exercises.

Working with gap-fill exercises is a more traditional, rather passive-reproductive type of approach, which can also be used to assess how much learning has taken place. This type of exercise contributes to increasing students’ active vocabulary only with additional practice of the target words in an applied context.

Procedure: The instructor prepares a worksheet with a text that has some gaps, which must be filled with the missing words. (“Tina picks _____ in the garden”; “Madrid is the _____ of Spain”). It is also possible to use illustrations which must be labelled.

Tina picks _____ in the garden.
 Madrid is the _____ of Spain.
 Mother buys bread at the _____.
 I like to _____ a glass of milk.
 An exciting film is being shown at the _____.
 The doctor _____ some medicine.
 In the _____ we are going to the beach.
 A knight wears _____.
 The flag _____ in the wind

bakery	prescribes	cinema
drink	capital	raspberries
armour	summer	flutters

- Simplified variant: fill in the gaps with the appropriate word from the list below. This approach is suitable for 1st–2nd graders (simple sentences and words), as well as for factual topics where a specific vocabulary word is required. Example: a factual text about farming, or a diagram of