



word

generation

UNIT 4.00

INTRODUCTION TO WORD GENERATION!

SCHEDULE

Day 1

Introduction to the Program
Action News

Day 2

Reader's Theater
Reader's Theater Activity

Day 3

Reader's Theater
About Discussion
Word Study

Day 4

Article
Interview

Day 5

Discussion
Writing

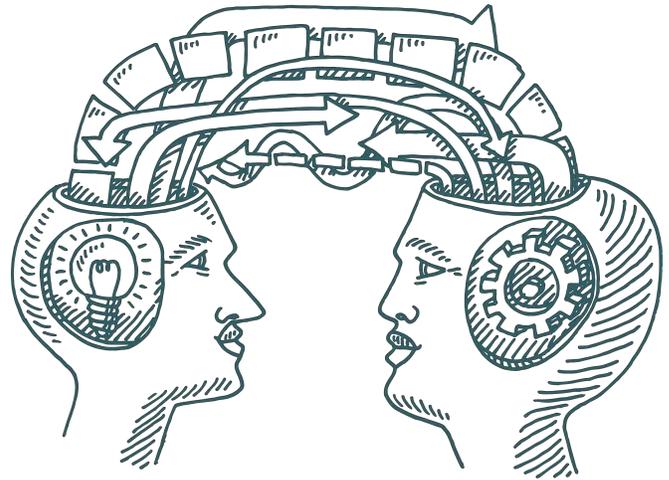
What is Word Generation?**Introduction***Letter to Students*

Dear Students,

Welcome to the Word Generation program! This program was written for you and other students in the fourth grade. It was designed to help you develop the kind of reading, writing, and speaking skills you will need in school, college, and to get a job. These skills will also help you to participate in important conversations about challenging topics. By reading, talking, and writing about these issues, you will learn hundreds of new words. You will also be preparing to become responsible citizens, productive professionals, and future leaders. By learning about these important issues now, you will be better prepared to help make the world a better place.

The Word Generation program for your grade is made up of twelve two-week units. There are powerful words included in each unit and used in the daily activities. These words are noted at the top of each page. Using these words will help you speak with more precision and authority, but the real focus of the program is reading, talking, and writing about important and controversial issues.

– The Word Generation Team



Examples of topics and pressing issues you'll be discussing, reading, and writing about include:

- What is fair?
- Should students share responsibility for each other's behavior in school?
- Who should decide what we eat or what's safe?
- Does arguing make you smarter?
- Why do we wear what we wear and buy what we buy?
- When is it acceptable to break the rules?
- Why do we value what we value?

What is Word Generation, continued**Introduction***Word Generation Activities*

Over the course of the program, you and your classmates will be reading, discussing, and writing about challenging topics while participating in various activities such as:

**Action News**

There are several newscasters, including Paige Reider and Justin Thyme. They introduce the topic covered in the unit through a video newscast.

**Reader's Theater**

Different characters give their perspectives or positions on the topic of the week. You will read the script together and then discuss each character's point of view.

**Word Study**

You will focus on learning the definitions of the focus words found throughout the unit activities.

**Ask the Expert**

You will read the interviews of two intrepid fourth grade reporters, Susana Flores and Arun Khanna, who interview experts on the unit's topic.

**Articles/Informational Text**

You will read short informational texts connected to the topic of the week.

**Math Activities**

You will read and solve math word problems that have focus words in them. You might already know the math, but to be successful you will need to know the meanings of the words in the word problems.

**Discussion and Debate**

You will discuss and/or debate the topic of the week with your classmates.

**Writing**

You will take a stand on the issue (your own or a character's) and write a letter or persuasive essay about it.

We hope you enjoy the program!

Introduction to the Newscast

PAIGE REIDER: Welcome to the Word Generation Newsroom! My name is Paige Reider and this is my co-anchor and field reporter, Justin Thyme. Justin, I understand you've been learning about something called "**academic language**."

JUSTIN THYME: Good day, Paige. And good day to all you student viewers out there. Paige and I are delighted to welcome your class to the Word Generation program. And yes, Paige, I am here in the field trying to learn more about **academic language** and its relation to reading **comprehension**.

PAIGE: Stop right there, Justin! I'm not sure I understand what you mean by "**academic language**." Can you explain, please?

JUSTIN: Well, I was wondering what **academic language** was too, so I went to interview Professor Catherine Snow. She's speaking to us from her office at Harvard University, where she heads up the Word Generation program.

PAIGE: Hi, Professor Snow. I think students who are participating in Word Generation would like to know what it's all about. Justin brought up something called "**academic language**." I speak Arabic to talk about everyday life with my parents, and I speak English with my friends and when I'm at school. Do I need to learn *another* language?

PROF. SNOW: Well, it's not a whole new language, but it is a different way of using language. We all use different kinds of language in different situations. When we're with our friends, we talk a certain way. When we're with our family, we might talk another way. But, when we do schoolwork, or talk about important issues that affect society, we need powerful language to communicate our thoughts, formulate our arguments convincingly, and communicate what we understand or want to know. That powerful language is sometimes called **academic language**.

PAIGE: Can you give us an example?

PROF. SNOW: Sure! Let's take the Pledge of Allegiance. Everybody knows it. But let's say a new student from another country who didn't speak English very well came to a U.S. classroom. Let's say she asked one of her classmates what the words "pledge," "allegiance," and "indivisible" mean. How many students would know how to explain the meanings of these words to this new student?

PAIGE: Those are hard words!

PROF. SNOW: I'd say that these are powerful words and we need to know them. Some kids—and adults—just repeat the Pledge of Allegiance or read the words without really knowing what they mean. Word Generation focuses on developing the kind of language—**academic language**—that students need in order to understand what they read. They also need these words to be able to talk about what they read. And we think the best way for students to learn these words is by putting them to use while discussing interesting topics and issues.

Action News continues on the next page.

PAIGE: Well, now I am thinking maybe if I talked more about politics with my parents I might learn some **academic language** in Arabic too.

JUSTIN: Good point, Paige. **Academic language** can be learned at any age and in any language! Professor Snow, thank you very much for taking time to tell us about **academic language**!

PROF. SNOW: You are very welcome. I know your student viewers are in for an exciting year of great discussions. Let us know what you think of the program, please!

PAIGE: Well, student viewers, it's time for us to go. We'll see you again in Unit 1.

This is Paige Reider, signing off!

Word Generation Action News is available online at
wordgen.serpmedia.org/action_news

Sentences with power!

A sentence without powerful words:

The pizza in the cafeteria is yucky.

A sentence with powerful words:

In my opinion, the quality of the pizza could be greatly improved.



Turn and Talk: Talk about these sentences with a partner. Can you identify the powerful words? How are these sentences the same? How are they different?

Reader's Theater

Introduction

Introduction to the Reader's Theater

Line

- 1  **Mr. Fuller:** Word Generation is a program that asks students to discuss big ideas about issues affecting them, their families, their classrooms, and their communities. In order to talk and write about important issues, fourth graders need to know powerful words and use them well. The more words you know, the better you'll understand what you read, and the better you'll be able to communicate your ideas in powerful ways.
- 2  **Michelle:** I know lots of words!
- 3  **Jason:** I've learned words from reading.
- 4  **Mr. Fuller:** I'm sure you both know lots of important words and are great readers, but there are students who don't understand what they read because they don't know the meanings of certain words. This program builds the kind of language skills that make you an effective speaker and an effective reader.
- 5  **Camryn:** I was thinking about the Pledge of Allegiance after watching the newscast, and I began to wonder if I really knew those words. I can say the pledge, but I can't say I really know what "allegiance" means. Or "indivisible."
- 6  **Jason:** Does "indivisible" have something to do with being seen? Like "visible"?
- 7  **Mr. Fuller:** Good thinking, Jason. Sometimes we can figure out word meanings by thinking about word parts, but not always. This is one of the cases where it isn't so easy. "Indivisible" is related to "divide," not to "visible"! Divisible refers to something that can be divided, like a pizza. But you did something really important. You asked a question and shared your idea, which helps us all to learn. Sometimes mistakes are even more helpful than right answers because they help us think carefully.
- 8  **Camryn:** So you're saying you want us to be wrong?
- 9  **Mr. Fuller:** I'm saying I want you to share your ideas without worrying about whether you're right or wrong. That's how we learn. In Word Generation class, we all need to be willing to say what we think, even if we make mistakes or change our minds later.
- 10  **Michelle:** Sometimes when I make mistakes I feel stupid. But I was thinking that indivisible meant you couldn't see it, too. So Jason's question helped me out.

Reader's Theater continues on the next page.

- 11  **Mr. Fuller:** Good point, Michelle. If we can overcome the worry about feeling stupid and share our ideas, we will all learn more! We hear academic words everywhere, like “indivisible,” which, by the way, means, “can’t be divided.” Sometimes, we even repeat them without knowing what they mean. In Word Generation, we are going to stop and pay attention to these powerful words, so we know how to use them ourselves. Then when we hear them on the news or during the political debates, we will know what they mean! Knowing these words makes you part of the world of big ideas.
- 12  **Camryn:** If I listen to the presidential debates, will I be able to vote?
- 13  **Mr. Fuller:** Sorry, Camryn. You’ll have to wait till you are 18 to vote, but in the meantime you can learn lots and lots of powerful words! Let’s do a little activity: Let’s compare everyday words, descriptive words, and academic words just to get a sense of how they differ.
- 14  **Michelle:** I use descriptive words to make my writing more interesting. So, instead of me saying, “The boy is cold,” I would say, “The little boy began to shiver in his wet clothes.” And words like *trudge* and *glance* are good too.
- 15  **Mr. Fuller:** Awesome examples. We are more likely to use everyday words like “walk” and “look” when we are not writing. When do we usually use these everyday words?
- 16  **Jason:** When we’re talking to our friends on the playground or in school when we talk about what we did on the weekend. Or at home.
- 17  **Mr. Fuller:** Right! Okay, so finally, the third group of words, and the focus of the Word Gen program, are academic words or **academic language**.
- 18  **Camryn:** Okay, my turn. I think academic words are the ones we would use to make a strong point when we’re talking or writing. So, I would say, “I disagree with your position, Mr. Fuller,” instead of, “You are so wrong!”
- 19  **Mr. Fuller:** Very nice comparison. So Camryn didn’t just give us words like “disagree” and “position,” which are important words, but she put together the whole sentence in a way that is powerful. Great readers, writers, and speakers know these words well and put them together in powerful ways.
- 20  **Jason:** This is pretty exciting, Mr. F.
- 21  **Mr. Fuller:** Let’s do a quick activity. Go to the next page and fill in the table. Think about the differences between the three categories of words and where and when you see and hear them.

Reader's Theater Activity

Introduction

Comparing Everyday, Descriptive, and Academic Words

Put the following words into one of the categories (there are two of each). Think about the differences between the three categories of words written below.

	Everyday word	Descriptive word	Academic word	Where do you usually hear or see these words?
cool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
smoky	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
analyze	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
brilliant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
awesome	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
interpret	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Partner Work:

Can you and your partner come up with your own everyday words, descriptive words, and academic words?

Everyday words	Descriptive words	Academic words

Reader's Theater, continued

Introduction

- 22  **Mr. Fuller:** Okay, let's move on to how **academic language** makes for powerful writing as well as for powerful speaking. Look at the two statements below written by two students, Mark and Sofia, after they were asked for their opinions on whether school uniforms were a good idea:
- 23  **Mark wrote:** I think school uniforms are bad.
- 24  **Sofia wrote:** I disagree with the school's decision to make students wear school uniforms because I think we should be able to express ourselves by wearing our own clothes.
- 25  **Mr. Fuller:** What do you all think of these sentences?
- 26  **Camryn:** Well, Sofia uses words, *ahem*, like the ones I used in my example. Words like "disagree," "decision," and "express."
- 27  **Mr. Fuller:** Good eye, Camryn!
- 28  **Jason:** I would say it's more than just the important words that make her writing strong. She made her writing even stronger by saying *why* she thought school uniforms were a bad idea. Mark didn't use powerful language or give reasons for his opinion. He wasn't very convincing like Sofia was.
- 29  **Mr. Fuller:** My little geniuses! We're going to have an exciting year together. So, let's review the topics we'll be discussing, how the program is set up, and most importantly how we're going to manage our discussions through the year. We need to come up with what we call "**norms**" or rules for our class. I have an example of what I mean, which we'll review this week. But first, let's talk about why discussion is so important!



With a partner, write a sentence about what you want to be when you grow up. First, write the sentence in everyday language. Then write the sentence again in more **academic language**. Look at the model below:

1. Juliet, she's like, you know, my BFF and she really, really likes dogs and is going to study them when she grows up.
2. My best friend, Juliet, enjoys working with animals and wants to become an animal behavior specialist when she becomes an adult.

Our everyday sentence: _____

Our rewritten sentence: _____

About Discussion

Introduction

Why is discussion important?



How discussion helps!

Here is a poem by H. Wheeler:

*I was walking through the forest,
When I came upon a cockroach —
Alan, he said.
I walked on.
I don't talk to cockroaches.*

How would discussing this poem with a classmate help you understand it better?

Let's say you are against wearing school uniforms, but your friend likes the idea.

How would discussing this controversial topic help you explain your opinion better?

Let's say a friend criticized what you were wearing. He feels bad and you feel hurt.

How would discussing this problem with your friend help you find a solution?

Let's say you saw this sentence: "The vampire *exsanguinated* his victims."

How would discussing this word with a classmate help you better understand the meaning of the word?

Word Study

Introduction

A Closer Look at Our Focus Words

It is important to know what words mean, but sometimes one word can mean many different things. Think about the word “run.” How many meanings does this word have? It’s also important to know how prefixes and suffixes change the meanings of words. By adding the prefix “un-” to the word “happy,” we change its meaning and create a new word: “unhappy!” You’ll also learn about “cognates,” or words in different languages that have a common ancestor or origin. If you’re lucky enough to speak a language other than English, you may already know of some cognates. “Cognatus” means “blood relative.”

Here are three examples:

- ➔ The word “national” in English has a Spanish cognate, “nacional.”
- ➔ The word “star” in English has a Hindi-Urdu cognate, “sitara.”
- ➔ The word “bicycle” in English has a Haitian Creole cognate, “bisiklet.”

	introduction	comprehension	academic language
<p>Definition</p> 	<p>(noun) the act of presenting something new for the first time; to explain a new program, topic, or idea</p>	<p>(noun) the act of understanding what is being said or being read</p>	<p>(noun) language used in the classroom and in many workplaces; language used to communicate about complex topics, to make arguments, and to present different points of view</p>
<p>Turn and Talk</p> 	<p>What do you do when you are making an introduction but forget the person’s name?</p>	<p>When was the last time you had to take a reading comprehension test?</p>	<p>Which of the following uses academic language to substitute for the word “fun”?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. awesome 2. enjoyable 3. frustrating
<p>Sample Sentence</p> 	<p>After a short introduction, the singer began her performance.</p>	<p>People nod their heads to show comprehension.</p>	<p>I use academic language when I write about something in school or when I present something to my class.</p>
<p>Cognate</p> 	<p>introdução (Portuguese)</p>	<p>compréhension (French)</p>	<p>lenguaje académico (Spanish)</p>
<p>Choose a picture</p> 	<p>Circle the picture that shows an introduction.</p>  	<p>Which sign shows reading comprehension?</p>  	<p>Circle the statement that uses academic language.</p> <p>I’m lovin’ it!</p> <p>Because of its delicious taste, I would select Option A from the menu.</p>

Sample Article

You will have the chance to read many articles and interviews in your Word Generation lessons. Here is an example of the kind of article you will read.

ARE PIT BULLS A DANGEROUS BREED?

FOURTH GRADERS CHANGE THE OUTCOME OF MD COURT CASE

A Maryland court decided in April 2012 that pit bulls were “inherently dangerous” animals. “Inherently dangerous” means that you can assume a pit bull is dangerous even if it has never attacked anyone! The ruling stated that owners of pit bulls could be held responsible if their dogs bit someone.

A group of fourth-grade dog lovers in Baltimore heard about this ruling and wondered if it was a good idea. One question they had was why pit bulls were being singled out. One of the students said, “Why just pit bulls? Shouldn’t the owner of any kind of dog be responsible if his or her dog hurts people?” Another one said, “But this isn’t fair to pit bulls. Some pit bulls are very gentle and would never attack anyone.”

When these fourth graders heard that the state senate was considering passing a law based on this ruling, they decided that they needed to speak up by sending a message to the legislators. Here was the first draft they wrote:

We don't think this is a good law. Some pit bulls aren't dangerous and some other kinds of dogs can be dangerous. So please don't write a law just about pit bulls.

After the fourth graders heard about how using powerful words makes for more powerful writing, they decided maybe they should rewrite their letter. Here is the revised version, which they sent to the members of the state senate as well as to the local newspaper.

To: Members of the State Senate

From: Grade 4C, Violetville School, Baltimore

We are writing to protest the plan to pass a law singling out pit bull owners if their pets attack people. Although pit bulls can be dangerous, we also know of pit bulls that are extremely gentle. We also know that other breeds can be equally dangerous. We feel it is unjustified to distinguish dogs by their breed and by anecdotal evidence rather than to distinguish breeds based on factual evidence that some breeds are more likely to bite or hurt someone.

Note: The state senate decided to postpone action on the proposed law. Maybe the students’ powerful words helped to influence their decision!



Turn and Talk: Work with a partner to analyze the second draft of the students’ letter to identify the powerful words they used to make their case.

Interview

Introduction

Sample Interview



You will have the chance to read many articles and interviews in your Word Generation lessons. Here is an example of the kind of interview you will read. Two intrepid fourth grade reporters, Susana Flores and Arun Khanna, interview experts on the topic of the week.

When animal behavior expert Juliet Baum talks about pit bulls, she draws from research studies about how dogs act but also from her own experience and mistakes as a dog trainer.

Arun Khanna: Dr. Juliet Baum, could you tell us a bit more about pit bulls? Are they more dangerous than other dogs?

Dr. Baum: Well, pit bulls look aggressive, and they are very strong. There are lots of stories in the news about pit bull attacks, so many people are intimidated by them. That means we might act scared or threatening with pit bulls, doing things that elicit attacks! Pit bull lovers point out that pit bulls are very smart. Like all dogs, though, they need to be trained to behave properly.

Susana Flores: Growing up, I always heard that certain breeds of dogs were just more violent than others.

Dr. Baum: Some breeds of dog can be trained more easily than others to fight, but to fight other dogs, not humans.

Arun: Why do dogs sometimes attack humans, then?

Dr. Baum: Dogs typically attack humans only when they feel threatened or scared. There is actually a dog test developed by the American Temperament Test Society (www.atts.org) that is designed to assess whether dogs are likely to overreact and become aggressive under normal circumstances. Dog owners can take their dogs along to a test site if they are worried. The ATTS accumulates data. Of the 839 pit bulls tested so far, only 111 (13%) showed overreactions: a smaller percentage than collies or Doberman pinschers and other popular pets. Of course, these aren't random samples of dogs, but it shows that lots of pit bulls are not likely to be dangerous and some other breeds might well be.

Arun: So why do we hear so many stories about people getting bitten by pit bulls, more so than by other breeds of dogs? What does the research say?

Dr. Baum: Interestingly, a recent study from the University of Pennsylvania identified dachshunds, Chihuahuas, and Jack Russell terriers as the dogs that bit humans most. They are all small dogs, so perhaps that's why they feel threatened more often.

Susana: So we shouldn't worry about being attacked by pit bulls?

Dr. Baum: You should be cautious when approaching any dog, whether it looks aggressive like a pit bull or cute and fluffy like a poodle. Dogs of any breed that have been mistreated, or that have come out of puppy mills that didn't train them properly when they were young, can be dangerous. But the vast majority of dogs just want to play and to be petted!

Susana: Thanks very much for sharing your expertise in animal behavior.

Dr. Baum: It was a pleasure. Enjoy your pets, and treat them properly.

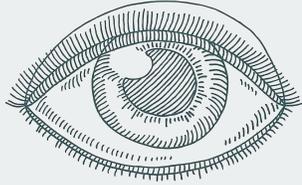
Arun: That sounds like good advice! Thank you so much for your time, Dr. Baum!

Discussion

Introduction

Norms for Discussion and Debate

Discussion in Our Class



Looks like:



Sounds like:



Feels like:

Let's practice:

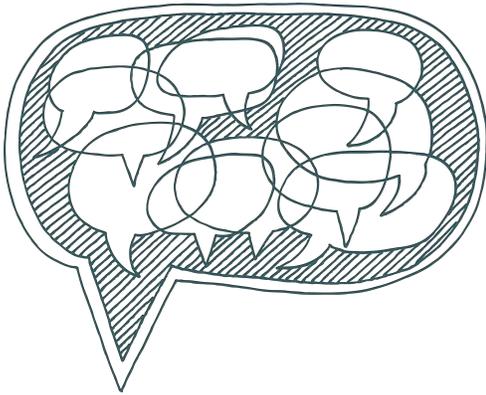


Discussion question: Should people have to pass a test to become dog owners?

Writing

Introduction

A Discussion Pledge



CREATE YOUR OWN DISCUSSION PLEDGE

Over the past few days, we have been learning about the importance of **academic language** and discussion. You and your classmates have also established discussion **norms** that will guide your class conversations. Using the Pledge of Allegiance as a model, create your own “pledge” focusing on at least two of the **norms** you and your classmates created.

Use the focus words to strengthen your pledge.

Horizontal lines for writing a pledge.



The Pledge of Allegiance of the United States

“I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

This page has been left blank intentionally.