



**word**

generation

**UNIT 5.00**

**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**  
Journals and Journeys  
Article

---

**Day 5**  
Discussion  
Writing

---

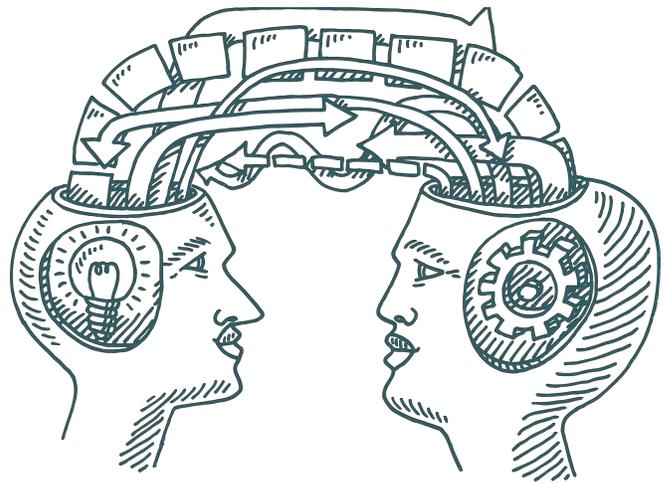
**What is Word Generation?****Introduction***Letter to Students*

Dear Students,

Welcome to the Word Generation program! This program was written for you and other students in the fifth 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 a community? Where do I belong?
- Should everyone be included? What happens when communities exclude?
- Are we responsible for each other? Why should we care?
- Why are we fighting each other? How can communities solve their conflicts?
- What makes communities happy? How do communities use their power?
- How does a community make decisions?
- Are laws always good?

**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 Sharon Wright and Reid Moore. 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**

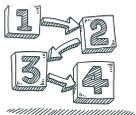
You will focus on learning the definitions of the six focus words found throughout the unit activities.

**Journals and Journeys**

You will read about Hester, Grace, and Betsy – young women from American history. You will learn about their lives through journals and see that communities long ago faced similar challenges as we do today.

**Articles/Informational Text**

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

**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 unit 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*

- SHARON WRIGHT:** Welcome to the Word Generation Newsroom! My name is Sharon Wright and this is my co-anchor and field reporter, Reid Moore. Reid, I understand we have a great surprise for our viewers today.
- REID MOORE:** Good day, Sharon. And good day to all you student viewers out there. Today, Sharon and I are delighted to welcome your class to the Word Generation program. The Word Generation team told us that this program will help students learn **academic language** and improve reading **comprehension** while discussing important issues.
- SHARON:** Stop right there, Reid! I'm not sure I understand what you mean by "**academic language**." Can you explain, please?
- REID:** Well, I personally know someone who can tell us exactly what that term means: my good friend, Professor Catherine Snow. She's speaking to us from her office where she heads up the Word Generation program. Catherine, are you there?
- CATHERINE SNOW:** I'm here, Reid! Good to see you. How are your kids?
- REID:** Well, after I talked to you last, I'm reading to them every night. They love the books you sent, especially *Maniac McGee*, *The Lightning Thief*, and *Esperanza Rising*.
- CATHERINE:** I'm glad they're enjoying the books. So, you wanted me to give you some information about the program?
- SHARON:** Hi Professor Snow. I think students who are participating in Word Generation would like to know what it's about. Reid brought up something called "**academic language**." So for example, Catherine, I know English and Spanish, so I know two languages. Is **academic language** like a third language that I'd have to learn?
- CATHERINE:** In a way, yes. We all use different kinds of languages 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 school work 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**.
- REID:** Can you give us an example?
- CATHERINE:** Sure! Let's take the Pledge of Allegiance. Everyone 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?
- REID:** Those are hard words!
- CATHERINE:** 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.*

**SHARON:** Well, I wish we could talk more but this is all the time we have. Thank you so much, Catherine.

**REID:** Yes, thank you very much for taking time to tell us about **academic language**!

**CATHERINE:** 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!

**SHARON:** Well, student viewers, it's time for us to go. We'll see you again in Unit 1. This is Sharon Wright, signing off!



Word Generation Action News is available online at [wordgen.serpmedia.org/action\\_news](http://wordgen.serpmedia.org/action_news)

 **Turn and Talk:** With a partner, write down three words that you think are powerful and explain why.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Reader's Theater

## Introduction

*Introduction to the Reader's Theater*

Mr. Holder and his class are talking about the new **academic language** program, *Word Generation*.

## Line

- 1 **Mr. Holder:** Word Generation is a program that asks students to discuss big ideas about issues affecting their classroom, their community, and the world. In order to talk and write about important issues, fifth 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 **Martine:** Hey, I already know a lot of words!
- 3 **Jackson:** I do, too! I love to read.
- 4 **Mr. Holder:** 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. So this program builds the kind of language skills that make you an effective speaker and an effective reader.
- 5 **Justine:** 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 do I really know what allegiance means? or indivisible?
- 6 **Jackson:** Well, indivisible sounds like it has the word divide in it. And if we're "indivisible" as a nation, then does that mean we can't be divided? That we're strong?
- 7 **Mr. Holder:** Nice going, Jackson. Sometimes we can figure out word meanings by stopping to think about word parts – but not always. We see and hear these academic words everywhere! Sometimes we even repeat them without knowing what they mean. We see them in newspapers, in history books, in math problems, and on the tests we take at the end of the year. We also hear them used on the nightly news or when someone speaks about serious and important issues. So, to know these words and be able to use them in speaking and in writing makes you part of the world of big ideas.
- 8 **Justine:** Awesome! I love talking about big issues. I want to be a lawyer when I grow up.
- 9 **Mr. Holder:** Let's do a little activity: Let's compare everyday words, descriptive words, and academic words. It's not a perfect way of thinking about words, but it gives us a general idea of how to think about certain ways of using language.
- 10 **Martine:** Let's go Mr. Holder!

*Reader's Theater continues on the next page.*

- 11 **Mr. Holder:** Let's start with *everyday words*. "Happy" and "fun" are words that can be used anywhere. When do we usually use these words?
- 12 **Jackson:** 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.
- 13 **Mr. Holder:** Okay, great. What about words we'll call *descriptive words*? You know, the words I urge you to use when you write stories or poems?
- 14 **Martine:** Oh, I know! Words to make our speaking and 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."
- 15 **Mr. Holder:** Awesome example. Okay, so finally, the third group of words, and the focus of the Word Generation program, are academic words or **academic language**.
- 16 **Justine:** 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. Holder," instead of, "You are so wrong!"
- 17 **Mr. Holder:** Very nice comparison. So Justine 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.
- 18 **Jackson:** This is pretty exciting, Mr. H.
- 19 **Mr. Holder:** 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**

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? |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| glittering  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |
| cool        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |
| investigate | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |
| glowing     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |
| super       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |
| explain     | <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

## Focus on Writing

- 20 **Mr. Holder:** Okay, let's move on to how **academic language** makes for powerful writing as well as powerful speaking. Look at the two statements written below by two students, Mark and Sofia, after they were asked for their opinions on whether school uniforms were a good idea:
- 21 **Mark wrote:** I think school uniforms are bad.
- 22 **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.
- 23 **Mr. Holder:** What do you all think of both sentences?
- 24 **Justine:** Well, Sofia uses words, ahem, like the ones I used in my example. Words like "disagree," "decision," and "express."
- 25 **Mr. Holder:** Good eye, Justine!
- 26 **Jackson:** 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.
- 27 **Mr. Holder:** 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** throughout 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. Erin, she's like, you know, my BFF and she really, really likes dinosaurs and is going to study them when she grows up.
2. My best friend, Erin, enjoys prehistoric animals and wants to become a paleontologist 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

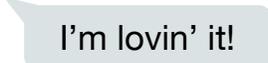
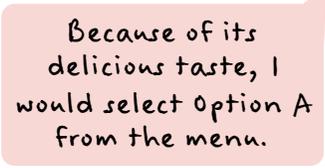
Introduction

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><b>Definition</b></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><b>Turn and Talk</b></p>     | <p>What do you do when you are making an <b>introduction</b> but forget the person’s name?</p>   | <p>When was the last time you had to take a reading <b>comprehension</b> test?</p>  | <p>Which of the following uses <b>academic language</b> to substitute for the word “fun”?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. awesome</li> <li>2. enjoyable</li> <li>3. frustrating</li> </ol>                                   |
| <p><b>Sample Sentence</b></p>   | <p>After a short <b>introduction</b>, the singer began her performance.</p>  | <p>People nod their heads to show <b>comprehension</b>.</p>   | <p>I use <b>academic language</b> when I write about something in school or when I present something to my class.</p>  |
| <p><b>Cognate</b></p>           | <p>introdução (Portuguese)</p>   | <p>compréhension (French)</p>   | <p>lenguaje académico (Spanish)</p>  |
| <p><b>Choose a picture</b></p>  | <p>Which picture shows an <b>introduction</b>?</p>   | <p>Which sign shows reading <b>comprehension</b>?</p>   | <p>Circle the sentence that uses <b>academic language</b>.</p>   |

## Journals and Journeys

## Introduction

## Hester's Journal



Greetings! This journal belongs to Hester, a 10-year-old Puritan girl who you will learn about through her journal entries.

Hester represents the community of Puritans who left England in 1636 to come to the New World (America) in search of religious freedom.

Her character is not real but her story is based on real events in history. You might have read similar stories that are called “historical fiction.”

Through reading and responding to Hester's journal entries, you will develop a deeper understanding of the historical forces that caused her family to leave their country of origin and adapt to their new community.



*Example of an Article*

Below is an article that describes how a community of fourth graders made a difference. These are the kinds of articles you'll read throughout the Word Generation program.

*Fourth Graders Speak for the Trees*

When fourth graders in Brookline, Massachusetts, learned that the trailer and website for *The Lorax* movie said nothing about saving the earth, they were surprised and disappointed. The whole message of Dr. Seuss' book had been lost! In the book, when a factory owner chops down all the trees, the Lorax speaks up for the value of saving them. The fourth graders decided that they needed to speak up too.

They learned about Change.org, a social media website where people can start petitions and gather signatures. About 10,000 new petitions on all kinds of issues from people across the world appear on the website every month! Together, the class created a petition to ask Universal Studios to change the movie's website so that it would transmit the book's message of saving the earth.

Their petition included these statements:

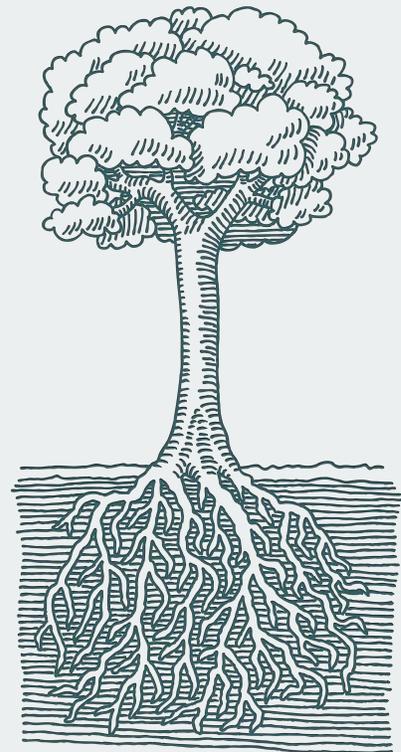
The Lorax movie, with its millions of dollars in advertising and massive audience has the potential to help heal the Earth. This movie can show the world we should not take our sky, water, trees, and animals for granted.

Please know The Lorax has power and that this movie could start a movement of kids helping the planet. The movie website and promotions should do what the book does and help the planet. This is possible with a few simple changes such as adding a "Lorax Tips" button.

They concluded their petition by quoting from Dr. Seuss' book:

*"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing's going to get better, it's not."* Please consider this line from the book; it is also true for the world.

Their petition got 57,239 signatures! This made an impact on Universal Studios. The company changed the website by adding activities and tips on saving the earth. From what her class was able to accomplish, Mikayla, one of the fourth graders, learned this lesson: "We're not just kids; we can be really powerful in many different ways."

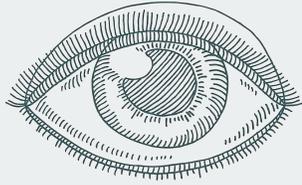
**Turn and Talk:**

This article includes three powerful statements from the fourth graders' argument for changing *The Lorax* movie website. Talk to a partner about these two questions:

1. What examples of **academic language** do you find in their argument?
2. If you created a petition to change something, what would you want to change?

## Norms for Discussion and Debate

## Discussion in Our Class



Looks like:



Sounds like:



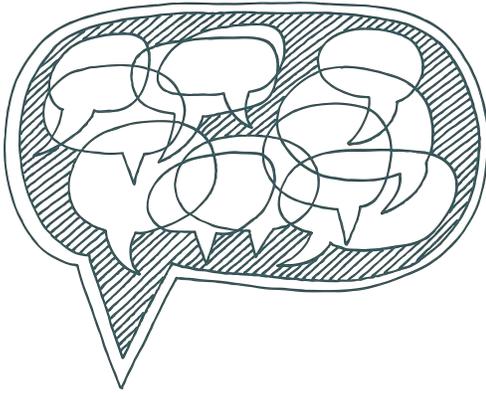
Feels like:

## Let's practice:



**Discussion question:** Should petitions from elementary students be taken as seriously as petitions from adults?

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.