Extending Vocabulary and Comprehension Instruction for SPIRE®

SPIRE® Provides Comprehensive Coverage of All 5 Pillars: SPIRE® 4th Edition incorporates phonological awareness, phonics, spelling, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension into systematic 10-step teacher-led lessons, reinforced by practice to ensure measurable gains.

This document highlights the extension of vocabulary and comprehension instruction within the SPIRE® program to further enhance students' learning experiences.

The Vocabulary and Comprehension spreadsheet, linked here, will serve as a reference throughout the document.

Vocabulary Instructional Routines:

These routines can be used during Step 6 (reading) for every introductory SPIRE lesson. For each skill, an "encoding" activity should be implemented as part of the SPIRE Introductory Lesson. For a SPIRE "A" lesson, a "storage" activity should be used, and for a SPIRE "B" lesson, a "retrieval" activity should be used. In the event you are only teaching a SPIRE Introductory plus an "A" lesson, for a particular skill, the "storage" and "retrieval" activities can be combined. These activities can also be combined if you are teaching additional lessons for a particular skill beyond the "B" lesson. Corrective feedback is bulleted below each specific activity description. The specific activities are described at the bottom of this document.

Vocabulary Assessment

Each group of words is assessed as part of the SPIRE Concept Mastery assessment. The student reads each word aloud, and then is responsible for writing a sentence incorporating the word. A "passing" score is 4 words used correctly in sentences. The words should be spelled correctly and used correctly in the context of each sentence. However, other misspellings and mistakes in the sentences do not count against the score. Teachers can also administer this assessment verbally, if preferred. Teachers should notate the number of correct vocabulary words in the "Comments/Observations" section of the Concept Recording Form, located in Blackline Masters book for each SPIRE level.

Example ([See spreadsheet for details](#)) **Level 1, Lesson 1 – Short a**

Tier 2 Vocabulary: blast, ask, craft, trap, grasp
Tier 3 – plan
Encoding Activity: *(E1) Parts of Speech*
Storage Activity: *(S6) Multiple Meanings*
Retrieval Activity: *(R5) What's the Word?*

Comprehension Instructional Routine, completed during Step 6 (Reading Comprehension) **of every lesson**

1. Read the title of the story (from the workbook or the illustrated decodable reader). In a small group, ask students the "background knowledge activation" question from Column H of the Decodable Info tab on the spreadsheet.

2. Read aloud an article related to the topic and discuss orally. Suggested content is included in links in Column I of the decodable info tab of the spreadsheet.

3. Complete Step 6 of the SPIRE lesson, following instructions in the Teacher's Guide. After students complete the graphic organizers, have students write a paragraph or more based on the graphics organizers. Suggested writing assignments are included in Column L on the decodable info tab of the spreadsheet.

4. Work with students to review their writing utilizing the sentence and paragraph writing rubrics.

5. Record notes on the student performance on the comprehension skill and any writing issues on the Concept Recording Form in the Comments/Observations section.

6. NOTE: During Independent Practice, students can use the Set B illustrated readers. Follow the steps above. For step 3, the decodable info tab of the spreadsheet contains suggested questions in Column K, and Column J lists a reference to the graphic organizer in the Blackline Masters book for each SPIRE level.

Vocabulary Activities

Encoding Activities:

(E1) *Parts of Speech* Create a chart with four columns, labeled *Noun*, Verb, *Adjective*, and *Adverb*. Review the parts of speech and have students determine where to write each vocabulary word. Prompt students to generate other forms of the word: *How can we make the verb "compare" into a noun?* **(comparison)** *An adjective?* **(comparable)** *An adverb?* **(comparably)** Students may be able to write some words in two columns without changing the form, while other words may not have additional forms. Display the chart or have students create the chart in their journals for frequent access to add new vocabulary.
Corrective feedback:
- If the student puts the word in the wrong column, review the meaning of that particular part of speech (i.e. a noun is a person, place, thing, or idea) and ask the student to look again and determine which column.
- Ask the student to use the word in a sentence (verbally) as the indicated part of speech.

(E2) *Verb Tenses* Create a chart with three columns, labeled *Past*, *Present*, and *Future*. Review the verb tenses and have students determine where to write each vocabulary word. Prompt students to generate other tenses: *How would we say this if it happened yesterday*? *If we plan to do it tomorrow*? To enrich this activity, include a review of progressive, perfect, and perfect progressive verb tenses and have students generate additional forms of each verb. Display the chart or have students create the chart in their journals for frequent access to add new vocabulary.

> Corrective feedback:
> - If the student puts the word in the wrong column, review the verb tense indicated on that column and ask the student to say a sentence including the word. After the student says the sentence, ask "Did that happen yesterday, today or tomorrow?" Provide hints and encouragement until the student is able to determine the correct tense.

(E3) *Affixes and Roots* Have students create a chart with three columns, labeled *Prefix*, *Base or Root*, and *Suffix*. (As needed, explain that a base is a word part that can stand alone, and a root is a word part that needs another part to form a word.) Students should use a digital or print dictionary to research each vocabulary word, writing the two or three word parts in the chart and recording the meaning of each part. Encourage students to look for commonalities among the words and brainstorm a list of morphologically similar words.

> Corrective feedback:
> - If the student puts word parts in the wrong columns, ask the student to provide a different word part to go along with it. For example, if the word is pretest, and the student puts "test" in the prefix column, ask the student to provide a different base word to attach to "test."

(E4) *Word Wheels* Draw a wheel with a circle in the center and four or five spokes. Have students write a vocabulary word in the center of the circle and fill each section with related words, examples, morphology notes, a personal definition, and an example sentence.

> Corrective feedback:
> - If the student has some related items that are correct, ask them about the correct items first.
> - If the student puts something on a spoke that doesn't make sense, ask them to explain their thinking. Provide hints and encouragement to arrive at something else that makes sense.
> - If the student has trouble thinking of items to put on the spokes, start them off with an example and ask them to think of another one.

(E5) *Wondering Word Hunt* Encourage students to look for words they don't know or are unsure of and make a habit of stopping to wonder about and learn meanings and relationships between words. Have students make the following annotations to an assigned text: circle unfamiliar words and write definitions, highlight key words and provide examples and non-examples, and draw lines to connect related words. After reading, students should share with a partner a word they circled.

Corrective feedback:

- Try to use peers to support one another – provide them with a model of a conversation about their notations. For example, say "I see you've circled the word _ _ _ _ _ on your page. Have you ever heard that word before? What do you think it might mean? I'm not sure either. I wonder if we should look it up."
- If both peers are struggling, provide the feedback to them both for a couple of examples, and see if they can follow your model.

(E6) *Synonym Challenge* Have student pairs write a vocabulary word in the center of a sheet of paper. Set a timer for one minute and have one student call out words that are related or similar in meaning while the other writes them. Then have students switch roles to generate antonyms or additional synonyms. Encourage students to share or display their work.

Corrective feedback:

- Review the definitions of antonyms and synonyms and provide a few examples.
- Have students work in pairs to check each others' work and provide feedback.
- If both members of a pair are struggling, provide modeling of the process.

Storage Activities:

(S1) *Road Signs* Have students work with a partner to create a vocabulary "road sign" using symbols or pictures to illustrate the meaning of a word. Some words may be tricky to illustrate; encourage students to be creative in thinking of context, examples, and related words or concepts. Students should label the back of their sign with the word and its definition. Number and display the signs for students, and have students try to identify and write each word. Review the correct answers as a class. [Note: This activity works best with words that can be represented with images.]

Corrective feedback:

- Ask students to verbally describe their images. Have other students ask questions and support students to improve their images.
- If student responses do not indicate they understand the word, ask them to use the word in a sentence.
- If the student uses the word incorrectly, provide a model sentence and then ask the student to try again.

(S2) *Hear, Say, Spell* Have students work with a partner or in small groups to actively process vocabulary words. Students should take turns leading the group by calling out a word for the other(s) to say and write on the board or a sheet of paper. Have the leader check the spelling of the word and use it in a sentence before switching roles to work with a new word. [Note: This activity may work better with decodable words.]

Corrective feedback:

- Most corrective feedback should come from the students to one another.
- If students get off-track, provide a model and ask them to try again.

(S3) *This, Not That* Draw a T-chart on the board with columns labeled *Examples* and *Non-Examples*. Model the activity with a simple word such as *plant*: *What are some examples?* **(tree, grass, bean stalk)** *What are some non-examples?* **(rock, animal, snow)** Then have students work with vocabulary words (e.g., *limb*; examples: *arm, leg, tree branch*; non-examples: *brain, hair, tree trunk*).

Corrective feedback:
- If an example is incorrect, ask the student to explain their thinking. Encourage and support as the student provides additional examples.
- Ask students to look at one another's work and provide feedback.

(S4) *Connections* Create two groups of vocabulary words (e.g., two sets of word cards, two columns, two circles). Have students take turns selecting one word from each group and explaining how the words are related. For example: *Appendix* and *index* are both parts of a book.

Corrective feedback:
- If an example is incorrect, ask the student to explain their thinking. Encourage and support as the student provides additional examples.
- Ask students to look at one another's work and provide feedback.

(S5) *What? How? Where?* Post vocabulary words around the classroom. Have student pairs walk from word to word, pausing at each one to take turns asking and answering three questions: *What does this word mean? How does this word relate to other words? Where would you see or use this word in your life?* Set a timer to prompt all students to move to the next word.

Corrective feedback:
- Most corrective feedback should come from the students to one another.
- If students get off-track, provide a model and ask them to try again.

(S6) *Multiple Meanings* Explain that many words students will learn in their content-area classes can have slightly different meanings, depending on the context in which they are used. Post vocabulary words around the classroom. Have student pairs walk from word to word, pausing at each one to take turns asking and answering two questions: *What does this word mean when it is used in the context of a science class? What does this word mean when it is used in a non-science context?* Set a timer to prompt all students to move to the next word.

Corrective feedback:
- Most corrective feedback should come from the students to one another.
- If students get off-track, provide a model and ask them to try again.
- If pairs struggle to keep track of the word meanings, have them create a Word Wheel for each word. Students write the vocabulary word in the center of a circle and each spoke is filled with a different meaning of the word.

Retrieval Activities:

(R1) *Conversation That Counts* Encourage students to use learned vocabulary words in conversations throughout the day. Create an incentive chart to keep track of word usage. Each time a student uses a vocabulary word, celebrate and tally a point on the chart. Provide a reward for a determined number of individual or class points.

Corrective feedback:
- If an example is incorrect, ask the student to explain their thinking. Encourage and support as the student provides additional examples. Provide the reward if the student moves toward correct usage of the word.

(R2) *Make a Match* Create a set of vocabulary cards and a matching set of sentence cards with a blank line replacing the target word. Have students arrange the cards face down in a grid and play a memory matching game with a partner. After making a match, students should provide the definition of the word.

> Corrective feedback:
>> ■ Most corrective feedback should come from the students to one another.
>> ■ If students get off-track, provide a model and ask them to try again.

(R3) *Vocabulary Triplets* Draw a large triangle and write a vocabulary word at each point. Have students write a sentence on each side of the triangle using the two words at the connected points. Challenge students to write a sentence using all three words.

> Corrective feedback:
>> ■ If the student has a correct sentence or two, ask them to read those first.
>> ■ If the student creates a sentence that doesn't make sense, ask them to explain their thinking. Provide hints and encouragement to arrive at something else that makes sense.
>> ■ If the student has trouble thinking of a sentence, start them off with an example and ask them to think of another one.

(R4) *Roll and Respond* Have students work with a partner to create a set of vocabulary cards. Display a key for each side of a die: *1. Synonym*; *2. Antonym*; *3. Sentence*; *4. Definition*; *5. Example*; *6. Non-Example*. Student pairs should select a card and then each take a turn rolling the die and providing a response based on the number. (If students roll the same number as their partner, they should roll again.) Encourage partners to check each other's answers for accuracy before selecting a new card and rolling the die again.

> Corrective feedback:
>> ■ Most corrective feedback should come from the students to one another.
>> ■ If students get off-track, provide a model and ask them to try again.

(R5) *What's the Word?* Write the terms *Synonym*, *Antonym*, *Definition*, *Experience*, and *Act Out* on individual cards and place in a stack. Write (or have students write) vocabulary words on individual cards and place them in a different stack. Have students take turns as the game host, selecting a card from each stack and giving clues to the other students about the selected vocabulary word. For example: If the host selects the *Experience* card, they should describe an experience that gives clues about the word.

> Corrective feedback:
>> ■ Most corrective feedback should come from the students to one another.
>> ■ If students get off-track, provide a model and ask them to try again.

(R6) *The Interview* Have students create a set of vocabulary cards. Student pairs take turns interviewing each other by selecting a card and asking a subjective question that uses the word (e.g., *Would you* admonish *a puppy for chewing up your homework? Why or why not?*). Interviewees should answer the question with a complete sentence that uses the word again.

> Corrective feedback:
>> ■ Most corrective feedback should come from the students to one another.
>> ■ If students get off-track, provide a model and ask them to try again.

(R7) *Tell a Story* Have students work together to tell or write a story using a set of vocabulary words. Students take turns adding a sentence to the story, earning one point for each new sentence and two points for a sentence that includes a vocabulary word. Create friendly competition by challenging student teams to build a story with the most points.

Corrective feedback:

- If the student creates a sentence that doesn't make sense, ask them to explain their thinking. Provide hints and encouragement to arrive at something else that makes sense.
- If the student has trouble thinking of a sentence, start them off with an example and ask them to think of another one.

(R8) *Context Clues* Have students work with a partner to write two sentences for each vocabulary word. One sentence should use the word in a subject-specific context (e.g., geology, biology, physics), and the other should use the word in a more general context. For example: The word *bond* can mean *a force that holds atoms together* when it is used in the context of a chemistry class, and it can mean a *connection between friends* in a work of fiction.

Corrective feedback:

- If the student creates a sentence that doesn't make sense, ask them to explain their thinking. Provide hints and encouragement to arrive at something else that makes sense.
- If the student has trouble thinking of a sentence, start them off with an example and ask them to think of another one.