Learning together

The Ace of Definitions

ACTIVITY #1

SEQUENCE : DEVELOPING VOCABULARY –
THE MEANING OF WORDS - PRIMARY

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Purpose of the activity

The goal of this activity is to help your child better understand the meaning of a word based on the core and secondary information in a definition.

Relevance of the activity

Your child can use this strategy when reading a definition that is not easy to understand or when they need to explain the meaning of a word in their own words. It's also a great way to check their understanding of a new concept to be learned.

Supplies

☐ Your child's list of vocabulary words
☐ A text or book that they must read
☐ Objects in your home

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LET'S GO!

Explain the activity:
We are going to identify the core and secondary information in a definition.

Explain why:
This strategy will help you to better understand the meaning of words when you read a definition in a dictionary or when you must explain the meaning of a word in your own words.

Explain when:
You can use this strategy whenever you encounter a new word, whether it's a word you hear or you come across with while reading.

Try it together:
In a definition, the core is the most important information: It is what allows us **to create the image** of the word in our head. It also allows us to classify a word in a category.

In general, the core is at the beginning of the definition, and the rest is secondary information, which adds **details** to **solidify the image** we are creating in our head.

Now, let's try to understand the meaning of a word based on its definition in the dictionary. First, let's look for a new word in a book.

Now that you've chosen the word, let's read the definition in the dictionary:

- What would be the core of this definition in your opinion and why?
- What would be the secondary information?
- Let's try to say the definition in our own words to see if we have understood what it means.

Now that you understand the core and secondary information in a definition, you can use it to define words in your own words. Let's try with the word "table"!

What is the core of the definition? What information allows us to classify the word «table» in a category?

- It is a piece of furniture, therefore it's category.

What would be the secondary information that could specify what piece of furniture we are talking about?

- We could specify its usefulness and what it looks like.

Without the secondary information, we wouldn't be able to get a clear picture in our head. We can now define the word «table» like this: A table is a piece of furniture on which we can eat, which generally has four legs, a flat top and can have various shapes and dimensions.

Quick tips!

Be sure that your child does not skip over a difficult word while reading. Encourage them to ask themselves questions as they read.

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