

Practice #11
**Word identification skills are used as a foundation for expanding
the use of the English language.**

The greatest masterpiece in literature is only a dictionary out of order.

- Jean Cocteau

The scholars and poets of an earlier time can be read only with a dictionary to help.

- Carl Sandburg

Purpose:

★ Beginning reading instruction must be meaning-based, involve students in frequent reading of informative and entertaining texts, and **provide clear, explicit instruction of important word identification strategies and skills**. After a comprehensive review of the research on beginning reading instruction, one can conclude that whenever that "balance" is lost – when reading instruction becomes so skills-oriented that meaning and the joy of reading are lost, or when literature is emphasized to the point that important skills and strategies are not taught – students are likely to encounter difficulty in learning to read. Pikulski, John. (1998)

Teaching Word-Identification Skills and Strategies: A Balanced Approach. Boston:
Houghton Mifflin.

Websites: www.merriam-webster.com/

<http://www.allwords.com/>

Implementation Considerations:

- 1) How are students regularly coached to analyze words? (pronunciations, parts of speech, definitions, etymologies, synonyms, antonyms, etc.)
- 2) Are easily referenced word walls with enriched content vocabulary created for use with students?
- 3) Are sounds, diacritical marks, spelling patterns, and morphologies reviewed routinely?
- 4) Are dictionaries and thesauruses available for daily use?
- 5) How often is the use of dictionaries and thesauruses modeled?
- 6) Are students encouraged to use Internet sites which provide pronunciation of unfamiliar words? www.merriam-webster.com/
- 7) When a student asks how to spell a word, what procedure is in place to help the student/s find the answer?

Example:

- a. Question is asked, "What are the first three letters of the word?" and help is given to identify the letters by sounds.
- b. With the first three letters the student uses the dictionary to find the word.

Pair/share strategies using this procedure might be incorporated before coming to the teacher.

- 8) Are the origins or roots of words shared to help in understanding the definitions?