

Building Vocabulary in Summer School

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Building students' knowledge of word meanings is essential to their success in reading, writing, and content area learning. The *Building Vocabulary* series is a groundbreaking structured approach to developing your students' general and academic vocabularies for the present and future. The *Building Vocabulary* program is structured around word patterns (rimes/phonograms for grades K-2 and word roots/morphemes for grades 3-11). We designed *Building Vocabulary* to fit within the scope of an academic year. Each level is organized to fit within 28 weeks, essentially a school year. However, with a few adjustments, the program can easily be made to work effectively in summer school settings as well. Below we offer a few tips for planning.

Select a General Option:

Option 1: Work with one unit per week. This would allow you to complete one lesson each day, one unit each week, and an entire level in 5 weeks. This is a rapid pace, so your instructional goal might be more a quick introduction to many roots rather than an in-depth look at fewer roots.

To use this option, you will need to devote 60-90 minutes to vocabulary each day. Be sure to do "Meet the Root" and "Divide and Conquer" as outlined in the *Teacher's Guide*. If you have Spanish-speaking students, take advantage of the "Cognate Connections" section of the *Teacher's Guide*. Work information about cognates into discussions as you can. This will probably take an hour.

Then either select additional activities (or ask students to choose) to round out the time. Note that many of the activities in the “Read and Reason,” “Combine and Create,” and “Extend and Explore” portions of lessons can be completed independently or in pairs/ small groups. You could also ask students to complete a few items from an activity in school and the rest at home.

Option 2: Teach selected roots in more depth. Choose two or three units for focus. If students have already completed the *BV* level, consult their former teachers to discover the units students found most challenging. Then focus attention on these units. The activities are engaging, and students have plenty of opportunities to interact with classmates, so this review is unlikely to be boring. Remember that there are also digital activities and games as well as differentiation suggestions for each lesson, so there are plenty of resources to support in-depth instruction of fewer roots.

If students are new to *BV*, you can do a quick pre-test to help you select units. (One is included in each level. See *Teacher’s Guide*.) Find units that will challenge but not overwhelm students. Another option is to select a unit about prefixes and a unit about bases. The “Teacher Notes” for each lesson give examples of how suffixes affect words, so you may want to draw students’ attention to suffixes within the context of lessons about prefixes and bases instead of devoting an entire unit to them. Consult the “Definitions at a Glance” section in the *Teacher’s Guide* to find the roots that produce the largest number of words.

Having selected the units, you can plan as above. Spend about 8-12 days on each unit. Use the schedule presented above to plan instruction.

Other Planning Tips:

- Consider assessment options. The *Teacher’s Guide* offers several ideas, but using them all in this context is probably inadvisable. You want to spend most of your time teaching, not assessing. Select an assessment idea that you believe will be effective for your students. Note that the informal Cloze assessments provided in each lesson can be used individually or as a whole group.
- Think about at-home activities. Each lesson contains several activities that could be completed at home. Send something home with students two or

three days each week. Invite parents or caregivers to partner with students as they complete the activities.

- Plan to communicate with students' future teachers. Tell teachers what roots you focused upon and, perhaps, a bit about students' success.