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Scholastic W.O.R.D.®

The Knowledge-Building Vocabulary &
Word Study Program for Grades K—5

SCHOLASTIC

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FOUNDATION PAPER

Scholastic W.O.R.D.®

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INTRODUCTION

Words open new worlds to children, empowering them to be literate, expressive, and successful in their endeavors in school and beyond. A robust vocabulary is inarguably a critical factor in becoming a confident reader (Ricketts, Nation, & Bishop, 2007; Sénéchal, Ouellette, & Rodney, 2006). Word knowledge is one of five "pillars" of reading identified by the National Reading Panel, a group of expert educators and scientists who reviewed research on reading instruction (National Reading Panel, 2000). Indeed, research suggests that a person's vocabulary is one of the strongest predictors of how well they understand what they read (Quinn, Wagner, Petscher, & Lopez, 2015).

However, many children enter school with insufficient vocabularies for the tasks required of them. Studies show that students living in low-income communities are likely to have substantially smaller vocabularies than their peers from middle- to high-income communities (Fernald, Marchman, & Weisleder, 2013; Larson, Russ, Nelson, Olson, & Halfon, 2015). This can adversely affect students who have limited vocabularies at a young age and never receive the supports to grow them. Students with below-grade vocabulary levels in lower elementary grades are often challenged as readers throughout their school careers and beyond (Lesaux & Kieffer, 2010; Raudenbush & Eschmann, 2015; von Hippel & Hamrock, 2019).

Teaching vocabulary has been shown to improve reading comprehension for students, yet with tens of thousands of root words in the English language, educators can understandably feel daunted by the task (Rimbey, McKeown, Beck, & Sandora, 2016). While learning rare or unique words can be novel for students, exposure to and practice with the words that occur most frequently in the text they encounter is most beneficial. Research on which morphological word families are essential to know to boost reading comprehension—and how and when students best learn them—informed the creation of Scholastic W.O.R.D. (Words Open Reading Doors), an engaging digital program for Grades K–5 that builds vocabulary knowledge and deepens topic knowledge in a captivating, interactive way. Scholastic W.O.R.D. teaches the high-utility words that make up 90% of all texts students will encounter in school, ensuring that students have a solid foundation to understand what they read and the ability to effectively communicate their ideas. While building their vocabulary knowledge in W.O.R.D., students also learn *about* words and *how* words can be altered or combined to further express ideas—skills that extend far beyond the W.O.R.D. program and which will benefit them as they encounter all future texts.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report reviews critical research that identifies the core vocabulary essential to student achievement and the key characteristics of effective vocabulary instruction, including related word-learning skills and strategies. It then describes how this research is integrated into W.O.R.D.'s learning program.

OVERVIEW OF SCHOLASTIC W.O.R.D.

Scholastic W.O.R.D. (Words Open Reading Doors) is an innovative personalized digital learning program that helps students in Grades K–5 master the 2,500 morphological word families that make up 90 percent of all texts they will encounter in school. Grounded in research, the interactive program uses thematic reading passages and related digital activities to expose students to high-utility words and their meanings in multiple contexts, encouraging deep comprehension rather than rote recall. Students progress independently, practicing new vocabulary—by, for example, experiencing the power of words through context, antonyms, synonyms, affixes, and inflected endings—in fun, engaging activities with the encouragement of Freddy the Squirrel, a character who cheers them along on their word adventure.

W.O.R.D. has an intuitive design where even the youngest learners can self-guide through the program. As a supplemental program the recommended usage is three 20-minute sessions per week, which can be completed at any time throughout the school day—small group, center-time, independent learning time—whenever a teacher feels is appropriate. Additionally, W.O.R.D. can be accessed at home for students who require or desire additional time with the program.

Scholastic W.O.R.D. Learning Cycle

The world of W.O.R.D. consists of 10 cross-curriculum themes that are repeated in each grade, enabling students to build rich content knowledge and word-learning skills and strategies over time as they learn new vocabulary within the context of the themes. For every theme, students follow a similar learning path of instruction, reading, and activity through five distinct components:

1. **What Do You Know?**
   Each theme in W.O.R.D. begins with a placement activity to determine a student's existing knowledge about the vocabulary that they will encounter in that theme; students are asked to match the correct image(s) related to a word from the theme. Instructional feedback is provided throughout the activity. A student's performance in the activity places them at one of two reading levels with the W.O.R.D. fiction and nonfiction passages: grade level or simplified.

2. **Book Nook**

   Following the placement activity, students visit the Book Nook, where they read two passages (one fiction, one nonfiction) related to the theme. Each passage exposes students to high-utility vocabulary words in context, along with grade-appropriate idioms and expressions. Students select which passage to read first. Full audio support and text highlighting is automatic for Grades K–1 and can be enabled by students for Grades 2–5. Additionally, closed captioning is also available and student-enabled.

   Based on a student's performance in the What Do You Know? activity, a student will read grade-level or simplified passages in the Book Nook. Vocabulary is identical at both levels of text, while reading passages have the same layout and differ only in presentation—for example, length of sentences or number of modifiers. The passages will always include the same high-utility vocabulary words and tell the same story.

   Texts at the simplified reading level make use of simpler sentences, emphasizing and repeating the high-utility vocabulary words. There are no contractions, fewer pronouns, and fewer modifiers. There is more repetition and reiteration of ideas from one sentence to the next and there are no extra non-vocabulary words that may be perceived as challenging. Where applicable, especially in the lower grades, the passages have less text per page and generally utilize a simpler layout (e.g., more line breaks). Grade-level passages include both the high-utility vocabulary words and some additional challenging words, using compound and complex sentences. For example, a text about animal shelters would use only the word *shelter* at the simplified level but, in grade level, would use *shelter* along with words such as *kennel* and *lair*. Grade-level passages also use subordinate clauses and antecedent pronouns, as well as more nouns and modifiers. Where applicable, the grade-level passages will have more text per page with fewer visual breaks. Regardless of reading level, all students are exposed to the same core word lists for that grade and theme—making W.O.R.D. appropriate for all learners.

3. **Mega Sort**

   Once students finish reading a passage, they then sort the new vocabulary words they have just encountered into megaclusters. Megaclusters are groups of words with strong semantic ties—words that are related in meaning or function, based on the meaning within the context of the passage. All megacluster work is done within the context of the fiction or nonfiction passages, reinforcing the connections between words and highlighting that a word can have different meanings depending on the context.

4. **Club House**

   In the Club House, students practice each theme's vocabulary through fun, engaging activities that help them master key learning objectives. Students in Grades K–1 have three vocabulary activities per theme while students in Grades 2–5 have an additional two activities per theme (for a total of five activities). The activities may be completed in any order, and students earn stars for completing each, as well as incentives such as "stickers" to customize their virtual Club House.

   Upon finishing all the Club House activities associated with their selected reading passage, students are directed back to the Book Nook to read the second passage for the theme and complete the learning cycle again with all-new content for the new passage, still utilizing the same high-utility vocabulary.

5. **Free Choice**

   After students have spent 15 minutes in the W.O.R.D. program, they are rewarded with five minutes of Free Choice. During this time, they can choose to reread the current theme's passages, replay any of the activities to earn more stars, customize their Club House, or revisit themes they have previously completed. If a student is in the middle of an activity at the 15-minute mark, W.O.R.D. will wait until the activity has been completed before offering Free Choice. Similarly, if a student has not finished an activity after five minutes of Free Choice, the program will wait until completion before transitioning the student back to the learning cycle.

WORDS, WORDS EVERYWHERE

According to the National Reading Panel, a group of leading educators and scientists, vocabulary is one of the five foundational skills that students need to master in order to be fluent, confident readers. Thanks to technological advancements, experts now have the tools to pinpoint which words appear most frequently in school texts and are therefore the most critical for students to know if they are to be successful readers.

GETTING TO THE CORE

Research shows that a relatively small number of words make up the bulk of written English. Leading literacy experts Elfrieda Hiebert, Amanda Goodwin, and Gina Cervetti examined more than 10,000 digitized texts written for students across grade levels and content areas. Their analysis identified a "core vocabulary" that accounts for more than 90% of the words in school materials (Hiebert, Goodwin, & Cervetti, 2018). These words "represent ideas that are central to the themes and content of texts, usually share root words with additional words, and are often versatile in their meaning and function" (Hiebert, under review, p. 3). Knowing 90% of the words in a given text is considered the threshold for meaningful reading (Clay, 1985; Clay, 1991; Stahl, Heubach, & Holcomb, 2005). Such proficiency allows a reader to get the main idea of a passage and correctly decipher the meaning of unknown words, which in turn further expands their vocabulary.

The core vocabulary identified through this research consists of more than 11,000 words, an unrealistic number for classroom instruction. However, research on morphological awareness suggests these words do not have to be individually taught. In linguistics, a morpheme is the smallest unit of language that carries information about meaning or function. Words may consist of one morpheme, such as *play*, or multiple morphemes, such as *playful*. Morphologically related words are grouped together in our internal lexicon, leading some experts to suggest teaching vocabulary as members of morphological word families (Nagy & Anderson, 1984). Their argument: If students know one member of a word family, such as the root word, they will likely be able to figure out the meanings of its family members. Research shows that proficient readers use root words to decipher unknown words (Carlisle, 2010), and that students lacking this word-sleuthing skill can learn it (Goodwin & Ahn, 2010). Consequently, Hiebert and her colleagues grouped the core vocabulary into 2,500 morphological word families, each including a root word, its inflected endings, and any derivational family members, with each family consisting of about five words on average.

COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

Educational psychologist Jerome Bruner coined the term "spiral curriculum" to suggest an iterative approach to learning (Bruner, 1960). He argued that a topic should be revisited multiple times during a course of study, with each encounter building on previous learning and progressively deepening a student's understanding of the topic. What is learned in an early loop of the spiral is linked to new information learned in a later loop.

Learning words benefits from such an approach, given that effective vocabulary instruction requires offering students many opportunities "to build their personal warehouse of words, to develop deep levels of word knowledge, and acquire a toolbox of strategies that aids their independent word acquisition" (Butler, Urrutia, Buenger, Gonzalez, Hunt, & Eisenhart, 2010, p. 7). Research has identified several attributes of vocabulary instruction that lead to these opportunities and help students expand their word warehouses.

Teach Words in Context

Learning words in context leads to greater vocabulary gains over time than rote memorization of words and their definitions (Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985; Nagy, Anderson, & Herman, 1987). In one study, two groups of 7- and 8-year-olds with limited vocabularies were taught a selection of new words. One group learned the words from definitions, while the other learned how to derive their meanings from context. Three months later, the context group showed significantly better comprehension of text containing many of the taught words. The students also effectively used the strategies they had learned to guess the meaning of unknown words (Nash & Snowling, 2006). As students encounter a word in different contexts, their knowledge of it grows incrementally. Each time, they learn a bit more about how words work and how they can take on new meanings and functions.

Read Related Texts

Background knowledge is the single best predictor of how well a person understands what they read (Gasparinatou & Grigoriadou, 2013; Ahmed, Francis, York, Fletcher, Barnes, & Kulesz, 2016). Without some knowledge of a topic, the words on the page are meaningless. Research shows that reading sets of related texts not only builds subject expertise but is also associated with growth in vocabulary acquisition (Cervetti, Wright, & Hwang, 2016). As students delve deeper into a topic, they can tap the knowledge they have acquired earlier to figure out the meanings of new words they encounter.

Make Connections Between Words

Words do not live in silos but share connections in meaning and function. Effective vocabulary instruction "involves not only teaching single-word entities, but also teaching words in conceptually linked groups, with particular benefits shown for teaching words in taxonomies" (Hadley, Dickinson, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2018, p. 55). Having students cluster words into categories facilitates comprehension, accelerates word learning, and enhances word retention (Neuman, Dwyer, Koh, & Wright, 2007; Neuman, Newman, & Dwyer, 2011). When students have mastered frequently used words in a particular category, they can draw on that knowledge to unlock the meanings of related words that are rarer.

Provide Multiple, Meaningful Exposures to a Word

Students need many encounters with a new word before it becomes part of their working vocabulary (Nagy & Scott, 2000; Biemiller & Boote, 2006). The quality of the exposures matters, too. Experts caution against "mere repetition" or drills, instead recommending a variety of interactive activities that expose students to words in different contexts and engage them in learning (Stahl, 2005). In a 2016 analysis of 36 studies that tested the impact of various types of vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension, education researchers concluded that opportunities to actively process a word's meaning—such as through comparing/contrasting, answering questions about the word, and semantic mapping—had a greater effect on comprehension than simply writing the definition (Wright & Cervetti, 2016).

Address the Needs of English Learners

English learners make up an increasing number of students in classrooms today, and many struggle with reading because of their limited understanding of high-utility words. On average, English learners score two grade levels below native speakers on vocabulary, a gap that hinders their academic progress (Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2011). The techniques described above to teach new words to native speakers apply to English learners as well (Graves, 2016). Additionally, a recent study found that English learners using computer-assisted instruction learned significantly more high-utility vocabulary than those in a control group. Word recognition was also faster among computer-assisted learners, and they showed significantly better reading comprehension than control students (Tozcu & Coady, 2004). Embedded supports in digital literacy programs, such as hyperlinked glossary items, appear to be particularly beneficial to English learners (Proctor, Dalton, & Grisham, 2007).

SCHOLASTIC W.O.R.D. AND VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

Scholastic W.O.R.D. is grounded in research that identified the most important words for students to know and the most effective ways to teach them, while providing important background knowledge on cross-content topics and building a number of word-learning strategies and skills.

A FOCUS ON THE CORE VOCABULARY

Based on the groundbreaking research of Dr. Elfrieda Hiebert, W.O.R.D. teaches the core vocabulary that makes up 90% of the words in school texts. These high-utility words, grouped into 2,500 morphological word families, informed the development of the 10 themes in W.O.R.D., which cover a range of concepts in social studies, science, and language arts. Students repeat each theme in each grade with new content, allowing them to build valuable background knowledge about the world as they progress through the program. The 10 themes can be reordered and completed to match a classroom's need:

1. Amazing Animals
2. Science and Technology
3. Blast from the Past (History)
4. It's My Job
5. People and Places
6. On the Move (Transportation)
7. What Is a Hero?
8. Habitats Close Up
9. The Arts
10. All About Me

For each theme, the two reading passages students read—one fiction and one nonfiction—emphasize a selection of words from the core vocabulary. The words fall into three categories:

- Core Words
- Explore Words
- More Words

Core Words and Explore Words relate most closely to the theme and include both concrete and abstract words, such as *hatch* (Core Word) and *separate* (Explore Word). More Words are high-utility words, such as *when* and *any*, which appear frequently in texts of all types. After having read both fiction and nonfiction texts for a given theme, readers will have encountered all of that theme's Core, Explore, and More Words. As students advance through W.O.R.D., the number of new words they learn progressively increases, from 20 words in each theme in kindergarten to 65 words in each theme in Grade 5.

SCHOLASTIC W.O.R.D.'S SPIRAL CURRICULUM

Words are part of the core vocabulary because they are versatile: they have many meanings, which make them frequently used in texts. Rather than overwhelming students with all of a word's meanings at once, W.O.R.D. introduces them gradually and always in context. The program follows the design of Bruner's spiral curriculum, continually building on a student's knowledge of a word. Learning is incremental and rooted in relevant content, which promotes deep comprehension, not rote recall.

Learning in Context

In order to be successful, students need to be linguistically flexible, able to discern which meaning of a word is appropriate in a given context. In order to support this skill, W.O.R.D. repeats many of the high-utility words in the core vocabulary in different contexts so that students develop a multifaceted understanding of them. Considering the word *shape*, students in kindergarten learn from W.O.R.D.'s reading passages and activities that *shape* refers to a geometric figure. By third grade, when students are able to use concrete words in idioms, W.O.R.D. uses *shape* to describe a physical condition. Fifth graders, meanwhile, encounter even more idiomatic uses of the word, referring to the formulation of an idea.

On one page, Dad makes a square and a circle.
Dad adds a round shape.
Dad colors in the lines.

Example of kindergarten passage using the word *shape*

John Henry loved hard labor and jobs that took muscles. And he could push or pull any load, no matter how big or heavy.

His habit was to work all day without rest. The amount of work in his weekly routine was more than most workers did in a year.

John Henry did all this and barely broke a sweat. He was in the best shape of anyone around.

But he could do fine, careful tasks, too—he could thread a needle quick as you please!

John Henry never stopped working, so his muscles never stopped increasing in size. In John Henry, the main ingredient was muscle tissue. He cut quite a figure!

But John Henry gained respect from everyone for his conduct, too. He was a great man, a figure men looked up to.

John Henry used to say, "Hard work is no vice. I'll be happy to compare my strength to any amount of labor."

One day that strength was put to the test.

Example of Grade 3 passage using the word *shape*

The next day, the fox gathered the animals. He held several straws between his teeth. At his request, each animal picked one straw.

Then the fox said, "Who has the shortest straw?"

The old rabbit had the shortest straw. The rabbit was a noble, gentle soul with a long memory. He also had a very clear mental picture of the place where the animals all lived. Every tree and rock had been logged into his brain. There was nowhere in the area that was unfamiliar to him.

The rabbit was calm. "I may not be a professor like you, Fox," he said. "However, I believe I will be a good match for Lion."

So the rabbit set off to meet the lion. He passed a deep well that he recognized from prior visits. As he looked into it, an image that matched his face looked back at him.

A brilliant plan took shape in the rabbit's mind.

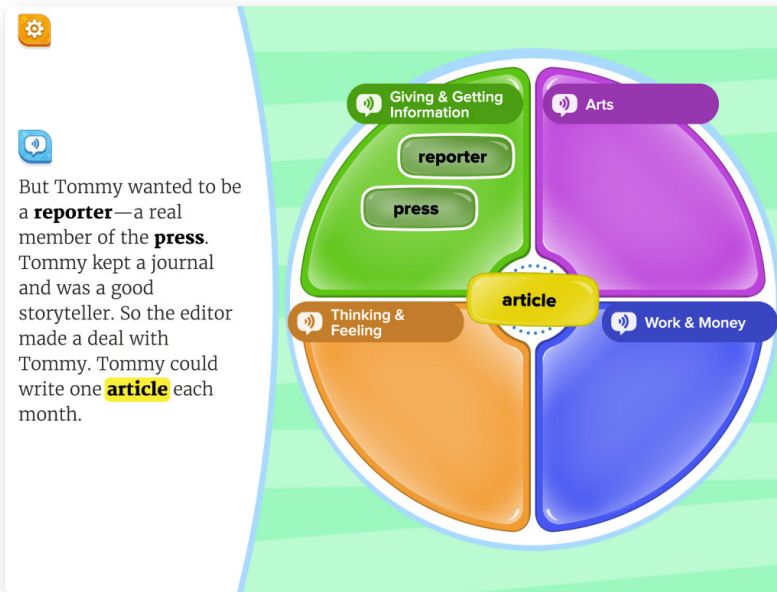**Example of Grade 5 passage using the word *shape***

Building Word Knowledge Through Related Texts

The 10 themes of W.O.R.D. were deliberately chosen to help students develop background knowledge in key topics related to the natural and social world. In the Book Nook, students read fiction and nonfiction passages that reinforce core vocabulary words in context. The reading passages differ for each grade, but all connect back to the particular theme to deepen knowledge, as demonstrated by the nonfiction and fiction passage pairs for the theme Amazing Animals: kindergarteners read about cat behavior and a story told by a house cat; second graders learn about bugs and read "The Grasshopper and the Ant;" and fourth graders read an article about wildebeest migration as well as the story of the Pied Piper. By reading thematically related texts, students develop areas of expertise and rich vocabularies that aid comprehension. After students finish a passage, a word progress meter celebrates the accomplishment by showing the total number of words they have read, and the number of new words encountered.

Making Connections Between Words

Activities that ask students to cluster words based on meaning or function reinforce an understanding of new vocabulary and the idea that a word can have multiple meanings. After reading a passage, students explore the connections between words and that words can take on different meanings depending on the context through W.O.R.D.'s Mega Sort activity. Using sentences pulled directly from the most recently read passage, students sort the theme's Core Words into megaclusters, a group of words that are related by the kinds of content they refer to, such as the weather or feelings and attitudes. For each grade, W.O.R.D. utilizes approximately a dozen megaclusters. The same word may belong in different megaclusters, according to the context of a sentence or passage.

For example, after reading a story about a boy who writes newspaper articles, fourth graders working on the theme It's My Job are asked to sort new vocabulary such as *article* and *reporter* into appropriate megaclusters.

But Tommy wanted to be a **reporter**—a real member of the **press**. Tommy kept a journal and was a good storyteller. So the editor made a deal with Tommy. Tommy could write one **article** each month.

Mega Sort activity sorting words into megaclusters or groups of words that have strong semantic ties and are related in meaning or function

If students associate a given vocabulary word with the wrong megaclusters, W.O.R.D. prompts for an additional attempt. If students provide an incorrect response again, the program automatically places the word in the correct megaclusters. This process allows students to work through the activity with errors, but ensures that proper information is shared for each word to deepen understanding.

At the end of the activity, W.O.R.D. displays the sorted vocabulary in their megaclusters word bubbles to give students a visual aid of how words go together. The "Giving and Getting Information" megaclusters, shown here, includes words such as *article*, *reporter*, and *media*— all words found in the most recently read passage in the Book Nook.

Example of when students complete the Mega Sort activity, the theme's Core and Explore Words are displayed by their megaclusters

Providing Multiple Exposures to a Word

Students need several encounters with a word before it becomes part of their working vocabulary. W.O.R.D. provides multiple meaningful opportunities to interact with and deepen understanding of high-utility words. By engaging in each of these opportunities in W.O.R.D., students excel far beyond just the definition of high-utility vocabulary words—the varied, connected, and diverse practice students experience results in the strengthening of skills and strategies necessary to decipher new words. W.O.R.D. covers many key learning objectives at the appropriate grade level:

1. **Homonyms:** Homonyms are words that sound and are spelled alike but have different meanings (covered in Grades K–5). Example: *Left* can be the opposite of *right* and the past tense of *leave*.

2. **Polysemy:** Polysemy is the association of one word with multiple related meanings (covered in Grades K–5). Example: The word *good* can describe one's abilities as well as one's character; someone can be a *good* singer or a *good* person.

3. **Synonyms & Antonyms:** Words can relate to each other by either having similar or opposite meanings (covered in Grades K–5). Example: The word *kind* is similar to *friendly* or *loving*. It is the opposite of *mean*.

4. **Expressions & Phrases:** An expression or phrase is used in a specific way to express ideas through words (covered in Grades K–5). Example: The words *quiet* and *time* can be put together to form the very specific phrase *quiet time*.

5. **Heavy-Lifting Words & Megaclusters:** In W.O.R.D., words from each theme are grouped into roughly a dozen megaclusters based on their shared meaning and function. The heavy-lifting words in these megaclusters are crucial for literacy because they are commonly used. Megaclusters teach how words are connected by meaning and function (covered in Grades K–5). Example: The words *swim*, *hunt*, and *protect* can all be grouped into a "nature" megacluster—as well as a megacluster focused on actions.

6. **Picturable Words:** Students can learn basic definitions of words by identifying how pictures are used to represent words (covered in Grades K–5). Example: Students can learn the word *shark* by seeing an image of a shark.

7. **Tenses:** Words can change to establish the time as the past, present, or future (covered in Grades 1–5). Example: The verbs *am*, *was*, and *will be* describe different moments in time.

8. **Inflected Endings:** Inflected endings are letters attached to the end of a word that tell numbers or tense (covered in Grades K–1). Example: The endings in *birds* and *foxes* signify the plural. The endings in *walks*, *walked*, and *walking* signify different verb tenses.

9. **Affixes:** Affixes are letters attached to the beginning or end of a word that change its meaning (covered in Grades 2–5). Example: In the word *unhappy*, the affix *un-* changes the meaning of the base word *happy*.

10. **Compound Words:** Compound words are words that may be combined to make new words (covered in Grades 2–5). Example: The word *rain* plus the word *bow* make *rainbow*.

11. **Simple Comparisons:** A word can transform into something new by adding letters or combining with another word to give it a different, but related, meaning (covered in Grades 1–3). Example: The words *big*, *bigger*, and *biggest* are related, but have differing shades of meaning.

12. **Analogies:** Comparing words to each other in parallel relationships clarifies meaning and highlights the characteristics they have in common (covered in Grades 2–5). Example: *Duck* is to *pond* as *whale* is to *ocean*.

13. **Idioms:** Understanding phrases whose meanings cannot be established by a literal translation of the words in the phrase leads to a more nuanced grasp of word usage (covered in Grades 3–5). Example: The expression *break a leg* cannot be understood by translating it literally.

14. **Derivatives:** Derivatives are words formed from other words (covered in Grades 3–5). Example: The word *wordsmith* is a derivative of the word *word*.

These learning objectives informed the design of all of W.O.R.D.'s components—and, combined with the spiral curriculum design, W.O.R.D. allows students to continue sharpening their skills over time with new vocabulary. The What Do You Know? placement activity, the Mega Sort activity, and all of the Club House activities together actively require students to utilize various skills to successfully accomplish the objectives above. Students in Grades K–1 complete three activities per theme; those in Grades 2–5 have five activities.

The five Club House activities cover a range of learning objectives:

1. **Wordy Workshop** (all grade levels): Students complete a sentence by selecting the correct **inflected ending, simple comparison,** or **tense.** When they have built a sentence correctly, the product rolls off the assembly line.

Example of Grade 2 Wordy Workshop activity in the theme, *"It's My Job: Teach Me!"*

2. **Ha Ha Shop** (all grade levels): Students are introduced to **homonyms** and **polysemy** and use what they learn to pick the best punchline for a joke.

Example of Grade 2 Ha Ha Shop activity in the theme, *"It's My Job: Teach Me!"*

3. **Zap! Pow! Blast!** (all grade levels): Students see vocabulary words in one sentence and identify the word's **synonym** or **antonym** to create a new sentence. In so doing, they learn that synonyms generally do not change the meaning of a sentence, while antonyms can make a sentence false or nonsensical. As students correctly identify the synonym or antonym, it is blasted apart and the new sentence is formed.

Example of Grade 2 Zap! Pow! Blast! activity in the theme, *"It's My Job: Teach Me!"*

4. **Monster Munch** (Grades 2–5): Students are exposed to the larger word families of the theme's vocabulary to practice **affixes, compound words,** and **derivatives.** When students create the correct word to complete a sentence, they can feed the monsters a snack.

Example of Grade 2 Monster Munch activity in the theme, *"It's My Job: Teach Me!"*

5. **Crabby Crates (**Grades 2–5): Students complete **analogies** to gain a deeper understanding of vocabulary words. When they complete an analogy correctly, the truck drives off to deliver its load.
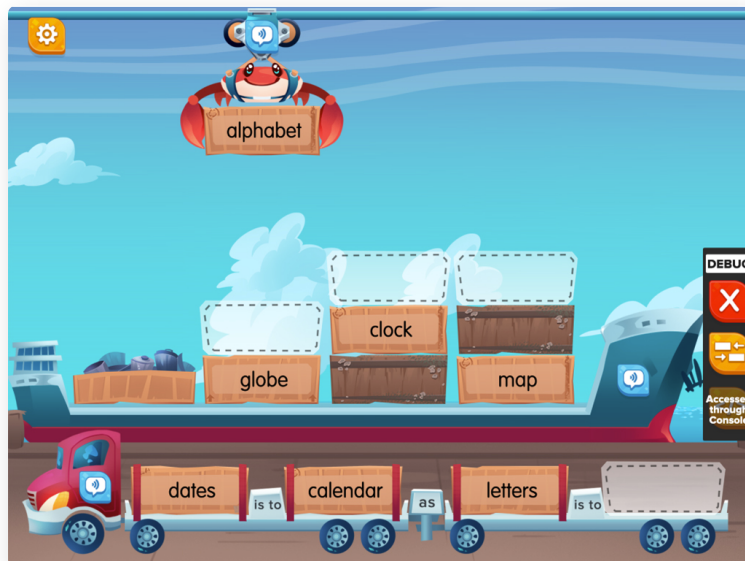
Example of Grade 2 Crabby Crates activity in the theme, *"It's My Job: Teach Me!"*

Once students finish the Club House activities, they are directed back to the Book Nook to read the second passage for the theme and repeat the learning cycle with all-new content. A new theme is unlocked after they complete all of the activities for both passages.

Meeting the Needs of All Learners

W.O.R.D. automatically places students in the level that corresponds to their grade, but educators can change the W.O.R.D. level for individual students at any time. Similar displays and activities make it discrete for students to work at varying levels without peers immediately recognizing a difference. Such flexibility ensures that English learners and striving readers are working at a level that is appropriate for their learning needs. The placement activity at the start of each theme in W.O.R.D. also differentiates learning by determining whether students work at grade level or at a simplified level. Regardless of their learning path, all students working within the same grade learn the same words.

Embedded supports are another way that W.O.R.D. addresses the needs of English learners, striving readers, and students with special needs. Text highlighting and read-aloud can be activated for any grade level, and students can click on any word in a text passage to read or listen to its definition.

SCHOLASTIC W.O.R.D. REPORTING

W.O.R.D. puts the right data into the hands of educators to monitor student progress and inform instruction. Real-time reports can be accessed from the educator dashboard, and all are available at the student, class, school, and district levels. Student and classroom reports are accessible to teachers and school and district administrators. School reports are available to school and district leaders, while district reports are accessible to district staff only.

OVERVIEW REPORT

The Overview Report provides data-at-a-glance about progress in W.O.R.D. at the student, class, school, and district levels. The report includes an overview of usage, theme progress, and average scores in each learning objective practiced in the program.
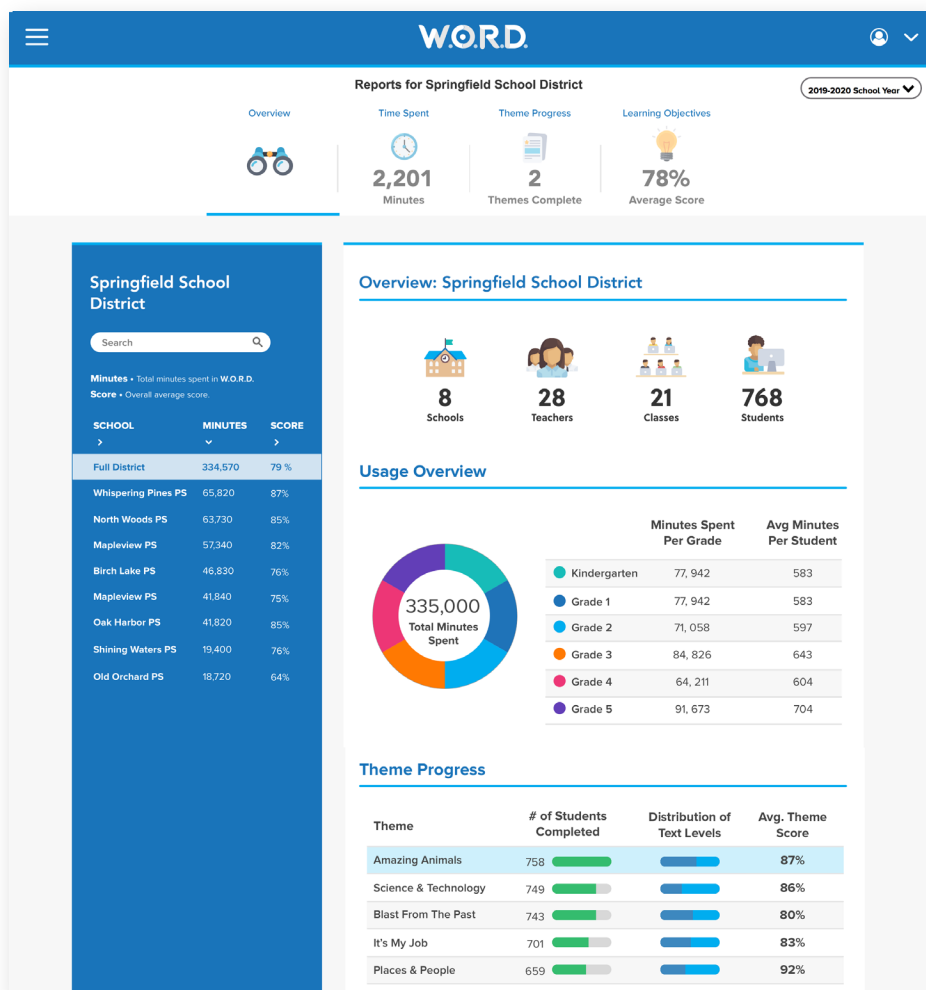
Overview Report at the district level

TIME SPENT REPORT

Using Time Spent Reports, educators can monitor W.O.R.D. usage, both in and out of school, at the student, class, school, and district levels. Teachers can explore the amount of activity for individual students as well as an entire class with metrics such as total minutes, total sessions, average number of sessions per week, and average minutes per session. School administrators can track time spent working in W.O.R.D. by grade level while district leaders can monitor district-wide activity.
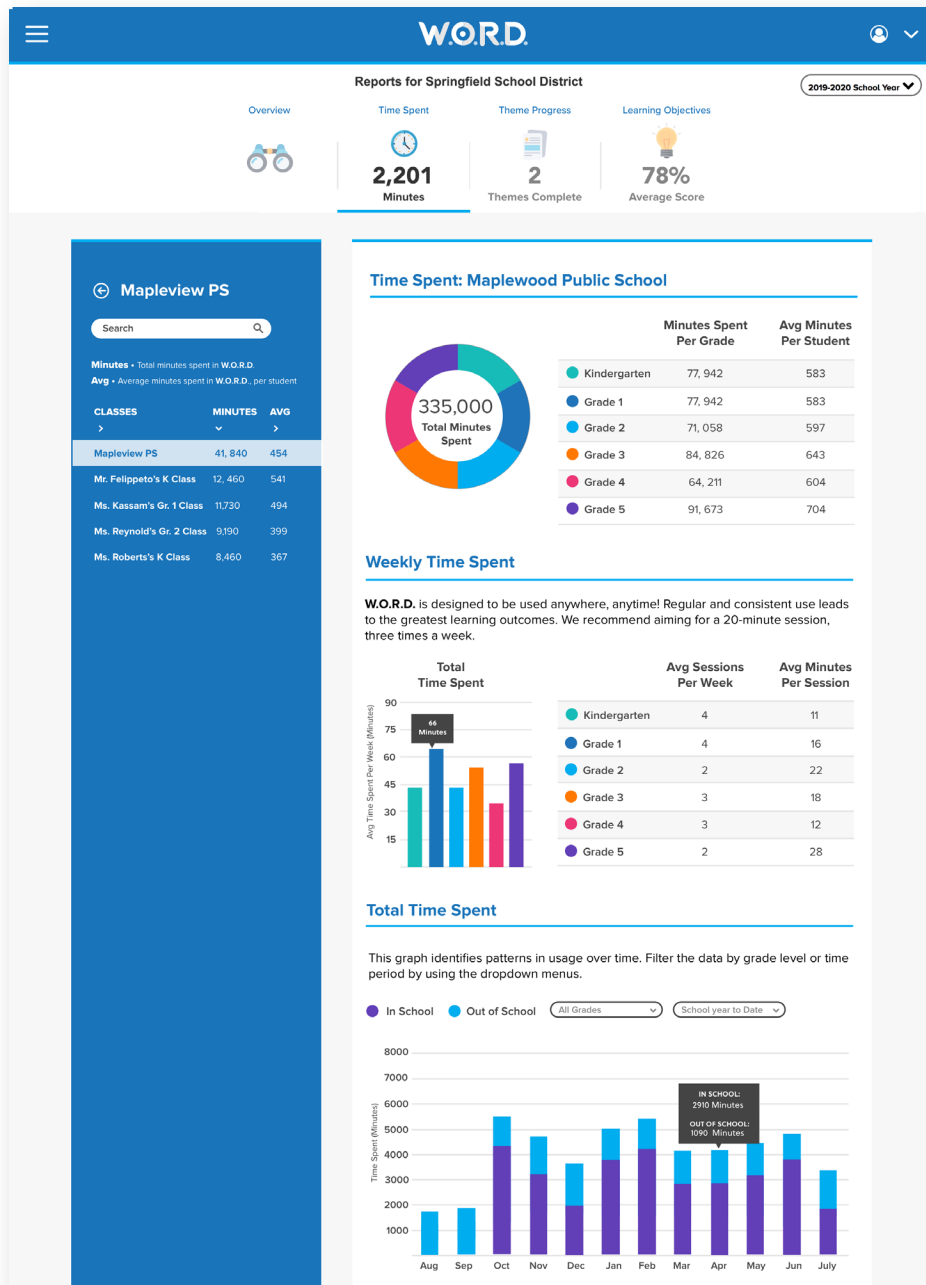
Time Spent Report at the school level

THEME PROGRESS REPORT

The Theme Progress Report shows detailed information about progress through each theme of W.O.R.D. and its accompanying activities. Educators can track students' proficiency in the learning objectives practiced in a particular theme as well as how their overall scores developed in the course of working through the theme. The report is available at the student, class, school, and district levels.

Theme Progress report for Grade 1 student

LEARNING OBJECTIVE REPORT

The Learning Objective Report provides an in-depth look at the level of proficiency in each of W.O.R.D.'s 14 learning objectives. Student scores are categorized into three proficiency ranges: Learning (0–59%), Practicing (60–84%), and Proficient (85% and above). The student report shows average scores for every skill practiced in W.O.R.D. Teachers can use the class report to identify a class's strengths and opportunities for growth and tailor instruction accordingly. At the school and district levels, the report can help set instructional priorities and goals.
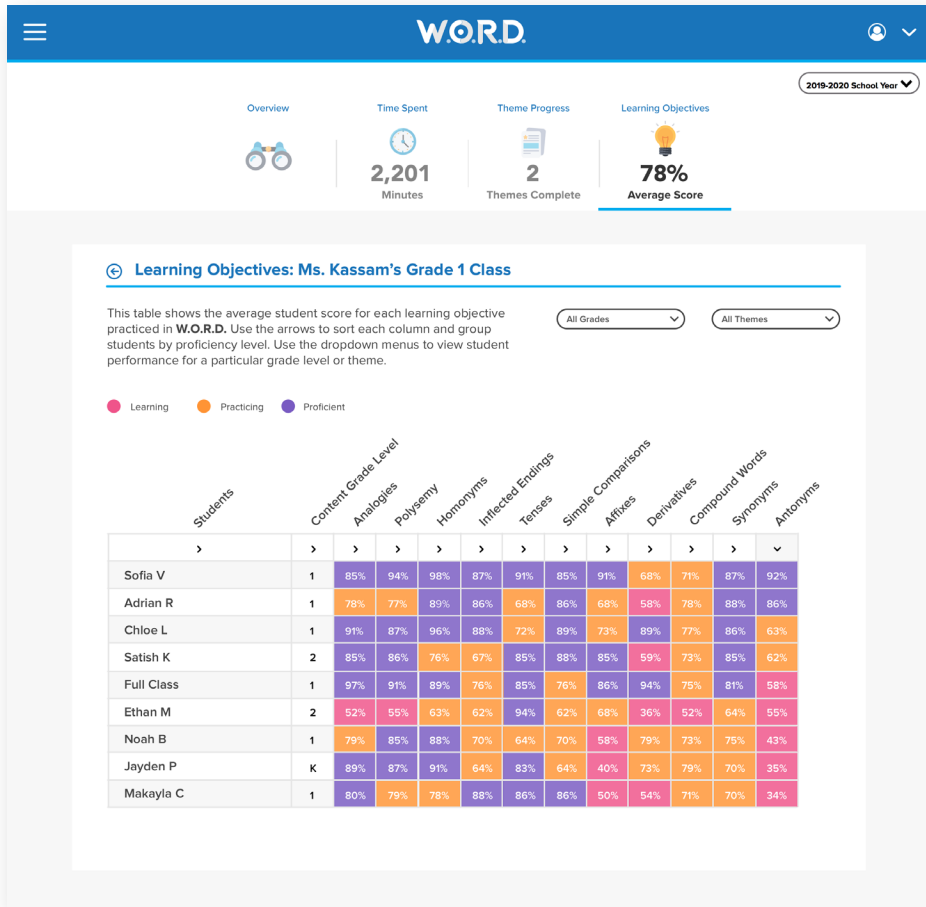
Learning Objective Report for Grade 1 class

CONCLUSION

Research shows that a relatively small number of words in the English language make up the majority of words found in the majority of texts. These words, known as the core vocabulary, are paramount for academic success, and fluency with them is crucial for students to become confident, proficient readers. The most effective instruction teaches the high-utility, core vocabulary in context and offers students multiple engaging opportunities to advance their understanding of how words work. Additionally, multiple opportunities to practice with the core vocabulary allow students to develop skills and strategies to decipher new words while deepening their background knowledge on a variety of cross-content topics.

Through thematic passages and fun, interactive digital activities, Scholastic W.O.R.D. builds students' knowledge of the core vocabulary, which opens doors to their knowledge of the world. Students encounter words in different contexts, deepening their comprehension, and have many opportunities to practice using the words, ensuring that they become part of students' working vocabulary. To aid educators, W.O.R.D. provides real-time student reports to monitor progress and inform instruction.

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