

Which Words Do I Teach?

Practice Identifying Tier 2 and 3 Vocabulary for Instruction

Grades 6-8

Read the two passages for this grade band below, one informational and one literary.

Highlight tier 2 words you'd teach for this passage in **yellow**. Remember, these are words likely to appear across many different types of texts—academic vocabulary, such as *relative* or *vary*.

Highlight tier 3 words you'd teach for this passage in **blue**. These are domain-specific words.

Note at the bottom of the page which words would require more time and attention versus less time and attention for students to learn. Jot a few thoughts about why. Is the word abstract or concrete? Does it have multiple meanings? Is it part of a word family?

Passage 1 – Informational:

Freedman, R. (2006). *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott*. New York: Holiday Press.

Excerpt from the Introduction: "Why They Walked"

Not so long ago in Montgomery, Alabama, the color of your skin determined where you could sit on a public bus. If you happened to be an African American, you had to sit in the back of the bus, even if there were empty seats up front.

Back then, racial segregation was the rule throughout the American South. Strict laws—called “Jim Crow” laws—enforced a system of white supremacy that discriminated against blacks and kept them in their place as second-class citizens.

People were separated by race from the moment they were born in segregated hospitals until the day they were buried in segregated cemeteries. Blacks and whites did not attend the same schools, worship in the same churches, eat in the same restaurants, sleep in the same hotels, drink from the same water fountains, or sit together in the same movie theaters.

In Montgomery, it was against the law for a white person and a Negro to play checkers on public property or ride together in a taxi.

Most southern blacks were denied their right to vote. The biggest obstacle was the poll tax, a special tax that was required of all voters but was too costly for many blacks and for poor whites as well. Voters also had to pass a literacy test to prove that they could read, write, and understand the U.S. Constitution. These tests were often rigged to disqualify even highly educated blacks. Those who overcame the obstacles

and insisted on registering as voters faced threats, harassment and even physical violence. As a result, African Americans in the South could not express their grievances in the voting booth, which for the most part, was closed to them. But there were other ways to protest, and one day a half century ago, the black citizens in Montgomery rose up in protest and united to demand their rights—by walking peacefully.

It all started on a bus.

Notes:

More Time & Attention	Less Time & Attention

Passage 2 – Literary:

Paterson, K. (1990). *The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks*. New York: Lodestar Books.

Excerpt

Long ago and far away in the Land of the Rising Sun, there lived together a pair of mandarin ducks. Now, the drake was a magnificent bird with plumage of colors so rich that the emperor himself would have envied it. But his mate, the duck, wore the quiet tones of the wood, blending exactly with the hole in the tree where the two had made their nest.

One day while the duck was sitting on her eggs, the drake flew down to a nearby pond to search for food. While he was there, a hunting party entered the woods. The hunters were led by the lord of the district, a proud and cruel man who believed that everything in the district belonged to him to do with as he chose. The lord was always looking for beautiful things to adorn his manor house and garden. And when he saw the drake swimming gracefully on the surface of the pond, he determined to capture him.

The lord’s chief steward, a man named Shozo, tried to discourage his master. “The drake is a wild spirit, my lord,” he said. “Surely he will die in captivity.” But the lord pretended not to hear Shozo. Secretly he despised Shozo, because although Shozo had once been his mightiest samurai, the warrior had lost an eye in battle and was no longer handsome to look upon. The lord ordered his servants to clear a narrow way through the undergrowth and place acorns along the path. When the drake came out of the water he saw the acorns. How pleased he was! He forgot to be cautious, thinking only of what a feast they would be to take home to his mate. Just as he was bending to pick up an acorn in his scarlet beak, a net fell over him, and the frightened bird was carried back to the lord’s manor and placed in a small bamboo cage.

Notes:

More Time & Attention	Less Time & Attention