

Word Talks

The word talks strategy is an ideal way to connect your students with word learning and language. I love student-led strategies, and word talks provide a venue for students to heighten their word awareness by adding to the discussion about words that are important to them. All these small but intentional word-learning opportunities create a word-rich classroom where language is valued.

Enhancing interest in and awareness of words by intentionally creating opportunities to talk about them fosters a literacy-rich environment. Further, putting students in the driver's seat is important as they develop and build their own vocabulary, which supports reading and writing.

Strategy: Word Talks

Pillar: Vocabulary

Grade Level:

- ☐ K
☐ 1
☒ 2
☒ 3
☒ 4
☒ 5
☒ 6

Instructional Grouping:

- ☒ Whole Group
☒ Small Group
☒ Individual

Consider This:

- Model word talks for students by sharing a word or two that you recently read or heard someone else use.
- This strategy is excellent for tier-one or tier-two words, depending on grade level, rather than highly specialized or domain-specific words.
- Students typically find words from their independent reading as well from digital media. The protocol in this reproducible indicates what students should share about each word.

What is it? The word talks strategy is a student-led activity in which a student gives a brief presentation on one to three words that they feel are important for their peers to know.

Why is it important? Word talks create the setting for students to be aware of words within books, media, and the world in general. Because students teach their peers, it's important to make time for word talks. Student-led discussion is rarer and often more memorable just for that reason. Additionally, students often say things or have experiences different than the teacher that make the information click with their peers.

What works in the classroom?

Implement word talks in a way that works for you and your students.

Simple Sharing Protocol

Along with providing a definition, students share the three following things.

1. The word and its spelling
2. Where they found it (book, conversation, digital media, or another source)
3. Why they think it's important

Schedule Word Talks

- Using the preceding protocol, schedule word talks for a specific day each week for students to share their words through a brief conversation about those words.
- Use morning meeting time and employ a rotation so that one or two students do a word talk per day, a few times a week.