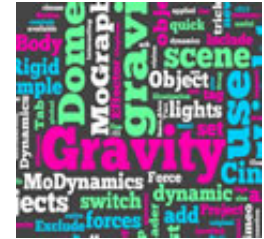


## Target Essential Concept Words



Many teachers have heard my push for core vocabulary within the content areas. This requires creating a list of grade-level specific terms that are high priority for student success in your classroom. This list would include approximately 30 terms/concepts and would receive year-long instruction--not just coverage when teaching a single chapter or unit.

Identifying these terms includes a few steps.



1. First, scour your academic standards. What are the concepts that are listed there that you find essential as part of your course curriculum?
2. Then, cross reference your list against any state or national assessments you administer. What you are looking for are not only words you omitted, but also synonyms for terms you identified. (For example, if the math teacher refers to the corners of a geometric shape, but the state assessment asks how many vertices are in a particular polygon, then our students will struggle to understand the question.)
3. Not only do you want to use the same terminology as the state assessment, but you also want to be consistent as a K-12 district. Build a common language for your students in all academic areas. Share core vocabulary lists with your colleagues to ensure you're all using the same terminology within the subject area(s). Are you going to call them topic sentences or main idea sentences? Is it pre-writing, planning, or brainstorming? Are they naming words or nouns? Identify core concepts and use the same terminology across all grade levels.

The power of core vocabulary is not just deep and on-going instruction of priority concepts; it's a means of creating common language among students and all their teachers.