

Previewing for Multilingual Learners

Supporting multilingual learners by introducing key concepts and vocabulary before the lesson begins

Instructional Practice Overview

Previewing essential lesson content is a way to provide multilingual learners (MLLs) with key background knowledge needed to engage with grade-level content alongside their peers. Beneficial for many learners, especially MLLs, preteaching supports engagement by creating meaningful access points to grade-level content and building confidence.

Why is this important?

Previewing concepts or vocabulary reduces the cognitive burden on multilingual learners while still maintaining the grade-level tasks of a lesson. When MLLs preview the most important knowledge in a brief, accessible way they can devote more energy to engaging with grade-level content and learning activities. This also supports MLLs in feeling welcomed in the classroom, boosting confidence and participation.

What is the Most Important Material to Preview?

Research suggests that previewing a limited selection of words or concepts is more beneficial than trying to cover everything that might come up in a lesson. The goal is not to “spoil” the text or learning experiences, but to provide knowledge students likely need in order to grapple with the text or task. To determine the most impactful words or concepts to preview, review existing materials and ask:

- What vocabulary or content knowledge is needed to participate in discussions or Independent Practice?
- Are there any cultural references mentioned in the text that could unlock important background knowledge?
- Are there idioms, words with multiple meanings, or examples of figurative language that could cause students to misread the text?



Planning to Preview for a 360 lesson

Previewing content or vocabulary can occur in a small group setting, in the first few minutes of class, or in collaboration with a co-teacher; regardless of format, it should be brief, focused, and accessible to MLLs. Consider:

- **Utilizing existing resources within CommonLit 360**, such as Vocabulary Activity Sets, Text Intro Slide Decks, Content Supportive Vocabulary Resources, Word Wall Decks, or Reference Sheets
- **Planning to ask questions that draw from students' prior experiences** to connect new learning to what they already know, build confidence, and foster an inclusive learning environment
- **Previewing a limited amount of the most important vocabulary or knowledge** needed for a lesson, which is more impactful than attempting a comprehensive overview of all unknown terms and concepts
- **Connecting vocabulary and content** that will be taught in a lesson by previewing words in context with visual anchors

What the Research Says

ELs in the secondary ELA classroom benefit from scaffolds to ensure their success in academically challenging grade-level content instruction while developing academic vocabulary. ELs require structured and meaningful opportunities to participate in academic conversations, both in writing and speaking. Research has shown that when ELs are given such opportunities, they are more likely to develop their language proficiency and succeed academically. (van Lier & Walquí, 2012; Gibbons, 2002; Hammond & Gibbons, 2005).

"It is actually the meanings of words with multiple definitions, figurative language, conjunctions, or prepositions that may be harder for ELs to understand than words that have difficult or complex meanings."

Klingner, J. K., Vaughn, S., & Boardman, A. (2007). *Teaching reading comprehension to students with learning difficulties*. Guilford.



Examples of What to Preview for a 360 Lesson

Lesson type	What to preteach	Why this matters
Reading Lessons	In 6th Grade Unit 1's reading lesson "The Scholarship Jacket" preview the unit vocabulary and key terms that appear in the lesson: - despair - protagonist - secondary character and preview key vocabulary and concepts needed to access the lesson's knowledge focus and independent practice short response prompt - ideas and beliefs - staying "true to oneself" - contribute read the About this Text section to preview the character and main problem of the story.	Defining a limited but impactful amount of vocabulary and key concepts, in this case, vocabulary that will be used to describe the story's protagonist, literary terms needed for the lesson's knowledge and skill focus, and giving students a brief preview of the story allows students to enter the lesson ready to engage with the grade level text. With background knowledge about the lesson's text and task, students can focus on making meaning of the text and responding to the tasks.
Writing Lessons	In 6th Grade Unit 1's writing lesson "Choosing Relevant Evidence" preview the following vocabulary: - relevant - evidence and preview a short example of the skill from the notes section of the lesson: - Martin is embarrassed by Grandpa after he arrives. - Relevant evidence: "I felt cold and hot at the same time as I recognized the man."	Defining the most important terms introduced in the lesson and sharing a brief example ahead of time allows students to enter the lesson with key background knowledge of what the new writing skill is, before practicing how to use the new writing skill during the lesson.
Discussion Lessons	6th grade Unit 1's Class Discussion prompt is: <i>Who influences teens and preteens the most: their friends, their families, or their own beliefs and opinions?</i> Preview key information to understand the prompt: - the definition of the word "influences" - the three influences listed: friends, families, beliefs and opinions and preview and practice one or two of the unit's discussion skill stems: <i>An idea I have is...</i> <i>I noticed that...</i> <i>I can't stop thinking about...</i> <i>I'm wondering...</i> <i>A thought I'm developing is...</i>	Defining key words and phrases needed to understand the discussion prompt and practicing the discussion skill stems ahead of time allows students to enter the class discussion with knowledge of what the prompt is asking and confidence using the discussion skill stems so they can focus on the content of their responses to the prompt and their peers.