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Sincerely,
Karen Haag

Part 1: Name 11 Fix-Up Strategies: Unlock Unfamiliar Words

A template of lessons so teachers envision what is possible when they write their own.

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Materials

1. Small group of students for this lesson, no more than 6
2. Chart paper and markers
3. Chart with some of the 11 Fix-Up Strategies – just write the ones the students already know
4. Post Learning Targets
5. Independent reading book or group reading book/student
6. 1 sticky note/student

Share Learning Targets

1. I can name the strategies I use to read words I don't know.
2. I can learn new strategies for unlocking hard words from my teacher and my classmates.

Engage

- Ask students to turn to a partner and tell what strategy she uses when she comes across an unfamiliar word. What's the first thing that comes to mind?
- Teacher listens in to find out what students say.
- Ask students to share their ideas and make a chart of their answers.

Explore

- Ask students to compare their list to the list you made, "11 Fix Up Strategies" by talking to a partner and comparing the two charts. Your list should not be complete. You will continue to add to it. By brainstorming their list ahead of time, they will more likely be engaged to compare their knowledge to yours. By talking and comparing they will more likely remember what you're teaching.

Connect to Prior Knowledge

- The students will likely have said, Sound it out. Your list will probably be more extensive. Lead students to understand that there are many fix-up strategies to use besides sounding out the word.
- Tell students that you will combine the two lists and make one anchor chart for the next lesson.

Read

- Students read their independent book or their group reading book silently. Students try using the strategies they know. They sticky note the one word that they figured out to report to the group.
- Students share the word they selected to share and explain how they figured it out. If a new strategy emerges, add it to the anchor chart.

Assess

- Review learning targets.
- Ask students to record one new strategy they learned or they remembered as the result of this lesson in their learning notebooks. Read over their shoulders and select one or two for students to read at the next lesson.

11 Fix-Up Strategies

1. Sound out the word. Take words apart in chunks or syllables and sound them out.
2. Use context clues. Read around the words and figure out the unknown word.
3. Remember. Use connections to understand what the writer is talking about. Try to think about what you know to figure out the confusing parts of the reading. Try to remember where you have seen the word or the root word before.
4. Use the picture to get information that may help you figure out the word.
5. Skip the word and read on. See if you can come back and figure out the word.
6. Reread.
7. Read slower.
8. Use the (online) dictionary to find the sound spelling and/or the meaning. Listen to the pronunciation of the word and see if that helps you know the word. If not, read the definition as well.
9. Study the root word, prefixes and/or suffixes to get clues as to the meaning of the word. Use your Spot and Dot rules.
10. Take a guess. Know when to guess and when to look up a word.
11. Ask for help.

Part 2: Teacher Think Aloud: Unlock Unfamiliar Words

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Materials

1. Post Learning Target
2. The same small group once again
3. Teacher's passage that everyone can see or run off passage for each student

Share Learning Target

I can listen to my teacher model how she figures out words she doesn't know.

Engage

Ask 1-2 pre-selected students to read from their notebooks: what strategy they learned or remembered from the previous lesson. Get other students to react and comment on the learning of their peers.

Explore

- To explore this idea of figuring out confusing words further, tell students that you will model how to read a difficult text. I like to use a passage from a book I have on brain research. Choose texts from science books or newspapers.
- Give each of the students a copy of the selection or display a copy where they can see it easily.
- Explain that when the teacher thinks aloud, the students are to watch what she is doing. She may ask questions but those are questions she's asking herself. They are not to answer. They are to watch her figure out the problem and be able to explain what they observed.
- Slowly, read the piece aloud to the students. When you come across words you do not know, talk out loud about what you do to help yourself through the reading. Don't spend more than 5 minutes on this part of the lesson. You don't need to read the whole passage to make the point.

Think aloud using a challenging book for you. This "think aloud" resulted from reading my brain research book. You can see right away why you don't need to read the whole passage for the students to get the point. Be careful! You might put them to sleep☺

I read...	I said...
Topic 21.3 The biology of the creative personality	<i>Well, I know that 21.3 is probably the text chapter number because this comes from a brain research book. I need to think about what I know about the brain to help me read this book. I'm wondering how the book is structured if the chapters say 21 point 3!</i>
"Exploring (High in the Openness trait) is probably related to higher acetylcholine, calpain and C-kinase level..."	<i>I can't read <u>acetylcholine</u> and I don't think I need to because it is a name and as long as I can recognize it, I don't need to know how to pronounce it. I don't know what <u>calpain</u> is but I recognize pain is pain and cal looks like pal so I'll guess and say cal-pain.</i>

Connect to Prior Knowledge

- Ask students to talk to a partner first and discuss what they noticed that you did in order to read this difficult text.
- Share.
- If new strategies surface, add them to the chart.

Assess Ask students to rate their performance on the learning target on a scale of 1-3 with 3 being the highest. Discuss the social skill of listening to the teacher model her thinking. Point out what they did well and what needs work.

Part 3: On My Own: Unlock Unfamiliar Words

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Materials

- Post Learning Target
- Post anchor chart of 11 Fix Up Skills. On page 1 of this handout you will find a complete explanation of the 11 Fix-Up skills. You may want to post the abbreviated version, which is the same as the bookmark. The bookmark is available online on the Fix Up page of www.liketoread.com.
- Give each student a [bookmark](#) of the 11 Fix Up Skills
- Choose a chapter from the science book to work with or a challenging passage.
- Timer

Engage

Ask students to whisper in your ear what the main idea of the lesson was yesterday. They can use their notebooks, the anchor charts, each other – any resource to figure it out. After each student shares with you, state the main idea: Readers use a variety of strategies to figure out hard words and they will for their lifetime. As they read harder and harder texts, they will depend on the same strategies.

Share learning target: I can try to use a variety of fix up skills when I come across words I don't know.

Explore

- Give students a short story or passage to read silently.
- Tell them you picked a passage that is harder than normal for the purpose of this lesson.
- Ask them to read the passage and notice when they come across unfamiliar words.
- They should record each word on the chart, a synonym or best guess of what the word means, and the strategy or strategies they used to figure out the word. It will be easier for them if they just record the number of the strategy.

Word I Don't Know	Synonym	Number(s) of the Strategy I Used

- Set the timer and tell students that they can work 10 minutes and you will stop them when 10 minutes is up whether they are done or not.

Assess Take notes on your students as they work through this part paying close attention to what they learned and whether they need more practice or re-teaching.

Ask the students to talk through their chart with a partner and tell their partner what words gave them trouble. Share what strategies they tried to figure out the word. Get help from their partner in figuring out the unfamiliar words if they haven't yet.

Share

Let the partners share with the whole group any words the students could not figure out alone or with their partner. Have the group figure out the words and share how they knew what the word meant. Take the time to model using more than one, and possibly all the strategies, when trying to figure out tough words.

Connect to Prior Knowledge

- Rename the discoveries the students shared. For example, when I do this lesson, someone is always surprised that they tried more than one strategy to figure out a word. One student was so tenacious she tried them all and she did figure out the word! Another discovery may be that there are subsets of strategies. For example, when you come across a name and decide to use the "Mr. D" instead of "Mr. Denagne" the reader is skipping the word (#5).
- Remind students that they will continue to work on this strategy – this year and beyond. They will rarely have a dictionary with them and they won't have a dictionary on tests. They need to practice figuring out words using everything they know already WITH the context clues!

Part 4: Helping Partners in Partner Reading; Unlock Unfamiliar Words

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Materials

- 11 Fix Up Strategies anchor chart posted in your work space where each student can see it
- Run strategy slips provided and put them in a brown paper bag or basket.
- Continue reading the science textbook chapter. Or, select a passage where students will have to figure out no more than 20% of the words.
- Same small group

Engage

- To review the strategies on the chart, let each student reach into the bag and pull out one of the strategies.
- Ask the student to read what's on the strip and then tell what it means in his/her own words.
- Use this time to reteach and reinforce what has been discussed previously.
- Collect the strips back.

Learning Target

I can help my partner during partner reading by asking questions.

Connect to Prior Knowledge

- Explain that the process modeled today might be a slow one. The other students will be tempted to offer their help. However, you are modeling what you want them to do for one another when partner reading. They should watch you to observe the kind of questions you ask to help a reader figure out the word independently. The goal is to help one another use the reading strategies to figure out new words, not to read perfectly. The goal is not to tell the partner the word unless there is no other option. Partners have to.
- Explain that they are just beginning to "think about their thinking." Eventually, the strategies will become automatic and the work will be easier. Remind them that everyone - even adults - uses the same strategies. Even though texts get harder, the reading strategies stay the same.

Explore

Work together as a small group to explore how to help a partner use the fix-up strategies.

- Ask one student at a time to read a paragraph, to stop when confronted with a new word, and use one more strategy to figure out the unfamiliar word. Ask the student to think aloud like you did to explain how she is approaching the challenge of reading an unfamiliar word.
- Give each student time to demonstrate what she knows.

Assess

Take notes while each student reads to determine whether the student is using a variety of strategies or depending on just 1 or 2.

Reteach (Optional)

Choose a second passage for students to try independently. Have them record the unfamiliar word(s) and the strategy number(s) on a chart just like they did in the previous lesson.

Cut the strips apart and put them in a paper bag or basket. Lesson 4.

1. Sound out the word. Take words apart in chunks or syllables and sound them out. Look for little words within the word.

2. Use context clues. Read around the words and figure out the unknown word.

3. Remember. Use connections to understand what the writer is talking about. Try to think about what you know to figure out the confusing parts of the reading. Try to remember where you have seen the word or the root word before.

4. Use the picture to get information that may help you figure out the word.

5. Skip the word and read on. See if you can come back and figure out the word.

6. Reread.

7. Read slower.

8. Use the (online) dictionary to find the sound spelling and/or the meaning. Listen to the pronunciation of the word and see if that helps you know the word. If not, read the definition as well.

9. Study the root word, prefixes and/or suffixes to get clues as to the meaning of the word. Use your Spot and Dot rules.

10. Take a guess. Know when to guess and when to look up a word.

11. Ask for help.

Part 5: Use Same Fix Up Strategies When Taking Tests; Unlock Unfamiliar Words

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Repeat lesson 3 using a sample test passage.

Part 6: Use Same Fix Up Strategies When Reading Test Questions; Unlock Unfamiliar Words

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Materials

- Anchor chart posted in the work space
- 1 copy of [bookmark](#) /student
- [Think Sheet](#) - one for each student
- Small group of students
- Post Learning Target

Share Learning Target

I can apply what I've learned about figuring out unfamiliar words to reading test questions and answers.

Engage

- Ask students to work with partners to see how many strategies they remember without looking.
- Give students their own copy of "11 Fix Up Strategies" bookmark to use in their reading.
- Ask students to tell you the strategies they forgot to name.
- Ask if students need to review any of the strategies or if they need any clarified. If a student from the group was absent, have the others explain the fix-up strategies to that student.

Explore

- Give students copy of sample questions from tests.
 - Lead a discussion with your group about what to do when they come across unfamiliar words in the questions or answers. Lead readers to the strategy shown here in gray.
1. Based on what you have read in this story, what would be the best thing to do if your teacher makes an error on your report card? Can you substitute a word that makes sense for the word "error"? Strategy #10
 2. Which word best describes Leila Josefowicz? You do not have to be able to pronounce the name "Josefowicz." Skip the name or substitute a name. Strategy #5
 3. What is the main theme of this selection? If you don't know the word theme, for example, look at the answers to see if one of the choices seems like the right answer. Also, try to eliminate choices that are not right. Don't shy away from picking an answer that includes a word you can't read IF you know that all the other answers are wrong. Also, relax a minute. Don't panic. Some students advise remembering where you have heard the word theme before. Strategy #3
 4. How does Leila manage her demanding schedule? Skip the word demanding and see if the sentence makes sense. You can sometimes get away with skipping adjectives, also. Strategy #3
 5. Why are fast dribbling and crunch sit-ups helpful for soccer players? You do not have to know how to pronounce the words to get the answer right. Go back to passage and reread what it says for crunch sit-ups to answer the question. Strategies #2 and #6
 6. Sometimes the question says something like, "Suppose you did not know the meaning of the word precipitation. What is the first thing you would do?" Answer the question as written! You don't have to know the words to answer this question. Look through the answer choices and select what you would do if you didn't know a word.

Connect to Prior Knowledge

Test Tip Answer: If you find an answer choice with an unfamiliar word, use the same strategies we've been practicing. However, do not be afraid to choose an answer that has an unfamiliar word. If you know the other 3 answers are wrong, the answer with the unfamiliar word must be right! For tests and all reading tasks, reference the text! Work around words you can't pronounce by reading all answer choices and eliminating answers.

Assess Think Sheets. Check to see where you need to reteach.

Directions: Suppose you came across these questions on your test. What fix-up strategies would you use if you could not read the word or words that are underlined?

1. Based on what you have read in this story, what would be the best thing to do if your teacher makes an **error** on your report card?
2. Which word best describes **Leila Josefowicz**?
3. What is the main **theme** of this passage?
4. How does Leila manage her **demanding** schedule?
5. Why are fast dribbling and **crunch sit-ups** helpful for soccer players?
6. Suppose you did not know the meaning of the word **precipitation**. What is the first thing you would do?

**Test Tip** 😊

You are on question #18. There are 4 answers and you can read the first 3 perfectly. You know all 3 are wrong. But you are confused. Answer number 4 has a word you can't read. What should you do?

Follow Up Lessons

Students continue to figure out what words mean when they come across words they don't know. Teachers do not tell them the word. Friends don't tell them. They take a guess using any strategy or combination of strategies, read on and then decide for themselves whether the word they used makes sense. If not, they look it up or ask someone at that point.

Guessing from context clues helps in two main ways: (1) students practice figuring out words like they will do in real life and (2) just from the guessing, words are more likely to go into long-term memory. If teachers tell students what words mean, teachers actually *create* word-for-word readers who lose fluency and confidence.

Two difficult problems accompany this advice: (1) it is hard to wait for the student to use his/her strategies, and (2) it is difficult for students listening to wait. For #1 – take notes and ask the student about the words they missed at a normal stopping point. For #2 – do not ask students to read in front of one another. Students should be reading at the same time or silent reading. Teachers address problems as they listen to the student or when the student asks for help.

Fix-Up Passages

I teach mini-lessons that help students understand and I explain what to do when they come across a new word for which sounding out doesn't work. The [FREE unit](#) is available on this site.

Test Questions

Continue to read and interpret test questions. Test questions are written in hyper-standard English. I find giving students a question a day for them to re-write in language they understand, pays off when my students take tests. I never realized how much the test questions were tripping them up.

Another idea is to add one test question per lesson – just one. Allowing time for students to explain their process for answering the question is helpful for everyone. It takes about 10 minutes to explore ONE question: talk with partners, reach consensus on the right answer, and explain the process. The talk time is invaluable for helping readers see how to reach the right answer. Talking together is more effective than Friday assessments.

Vocabulary

Students continue to gather vocabulary words from group-book books, content reading, or independent reading. Set aside 20 minutes per week for students to discuss (1) the word, (2) the context, (3) what they thought it meant, and (4) what they found it meant when they looked up the word - written in their own words. That means they collect the words in the same way so they can share in small groups.

Word	Phrase or Sentence	Prediction	Right or new definition
grew	"Einstein's father <u>grew</u> angry..."	Einstein grew up to be angry	Grew has more than one definition. Here it means to get bigger and bigger.