



Speak Agent for
Primary Grades

v1.8

Teacher's Guide



How to Successfully Implement Speak Agent with Your Students



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Intended Use

Speak Agent's mission is to help diverse learners master challenging academic language and concepts critical to their success. A lot of education technology is hard to put into practice. As former educators ourselves, the team at Speak Agent is sensitive to the burden that technology often puts on classroom teachers. We've worked to make it as easy as possible to work the program into your existing practice. For one, all of the digital lessons in Speak Agent directly align to your curriculum scope and sequence. So when you are teaching Unit 2, all of the academic language in Speak Agent will support Unit 2, etc. Each digital lesson comes with a two-page plan that lists unit vocabulary, briefly describes each activity, provides estimated time to complete each, and provides an answer key, where needed.

We also designed Speak Agent to be highly flexible to your existing schedules and time constraints. And, it works on just about any technology setup, including shared devices, so you don't necessarily have to go to a computer lab, reserve a cart, or rotate in stations every time you want to use Speak Agent. It's a tool that gives you options! The next few sections talk about timing and technology a bit more.

How Do I Use Speak Agent?




Speak Agent provides academic language learning that integrates seamlessly with your curriculum. So, if you're teaching Unit 2 of a course/curriculum, there will be one or more digital lessons in Speak Agent that address the academic language relevant to that unit.

When Do I Use It?

Each digital lesson has a variety of activities. These are organized into a recommended sequence. Some activities are appropriate at the **start** of a unit to build familiarity with new concepts and vocabulary. Some work well **during** a unit to build comprehension. And, finally, some are good culminating activities at the **end** of a unit that synthesize everything students learned. Detailed guidance on each lesson and activity is provided in our series of guides. But you do not always have to follow the recommended sequence. You always have the option to use the tool in a way that best suits your students' needs or class schedule.

What Is My Role as Teacher?

Most Speak Agent lessons include several types of activities, each of which offers you the opportunity to take on a different kind of role:

-  **Guided Practice** activities are teacher-led. This can include presenting new vocabulary, modeling new kinds of activities, or moderating group/team activities.
-  **Independent Practice** is student-driven. Once familiar with the various kinds of activities in Speak Agent, most students should be able to complete these independently — freeing up time for you to help struggling students.
-  **Co-Learning** activities enable you to pair up students to work together. Depending on the activity, each student may assume a special role such as speaker, listener, writer, or editor. The activity guides in the Appendix describe this further.

Remember, Speak Agent is about **content and language integration**. Many activities, therefore, are designed for you and your students to **interact and communicate** with one another! In addition, you also have the option to review student work samples in their digital portfolios, which are explained later in this guide.



The image shows a grid of 8 activity cards, numbered 1 through 8, arranged in two rows of four. The cards are categorized into three groups: Guided Practice (cards 1-4), Co-Learning (cards 5-6), and Independent Practice (cards 7-8). Each card features a title, a description, and a play button icon.

Category	Card Number	Title	Description
Guided Practice	1	Word Review	Grade 2, MP4 Reading 1 Review
	2	Video	Story Elements
	3	Video	Onomatopoeia
	4	Picture Pairs	Grade 2, MP4 Reading 1 Flashcard
Co-Learning	5	Tall Tales	Writing Wonder Woman
	6	Scrambled Sentences	Writing Wonder Woman
Independent Practice	7	Vocab Lab	Reading Words (Reading, Grade 2, MP4)
	8	Matching	Grade 2, MP4 Reading 1 Match

What Choices Can Students Make?

Speak Agent is a self-paced tool that gives students agency. This is critical to sustaining student motivation and engagement. Within the independent practice portion of a lesson, students may decide which activities to do when and for how long. Each digital lesson is ordered in a recommended sequence, but students may complete activities and tasks in any order. In some cases they may even self-select a difficulty level. Students can partially complete activities and finish them later. There is also no time performance element: They can pause and get help or hints at any point without interrupting practice. The only strict limitation is that students may only access lessons assigned to them. It's up to you to set any ground rules you wish to set. Your Speak Agent account shows you which lessons/activities are completed by each student.

How Are Lessons Assigned to Students?

In a typical implementation, digital lessons are automatically assigned to all students in your class on a schedule that corresponds with your curriculum pacing guide / year-at-a-glance. You will be notified in advance by email and provided with information about the upcoming lesson.

How Frequently Should I Use Speak Agent?

Recommended usage is **one hour per week**. You have a great deal of flexibility with how to achieve this, as outlined below.

One Speak Agent digital lesson usually contains 6 to 8 activities. These activities are interactive games or exercises that require listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing using content from the current unit. Each lesson provides a mix of short-form and long-form activities.

- **Short-form activities** can be done in as little as 5 to 15 minutes of practice.
- **Long-form activities** take 15 to 30 minutes. They generally require higher cognition, integration of skills and knowledge, and/or collaboration.
- In the event a student cannot finish a long-form activity within the allotted time, don't worry! Long-form activities are auto-saved and can be continued later by the student.

Usage Scenarios

Here are some scenarios that illustrate the flexibility that Speak Agent offers:

- A.** You could do short-form Guided Practice one day a week, Independent Practice one or two days a week, and then one day a week for the long-form / co-learning activities.

- B. You could do Guided Practice on a projector for 5 to 8 minutes daily at the start of class and then do the longer-form independent and co-learning activities on days when you have more time available. This kind of daily review is a good research-based strategy.
- C. You could pack it all into one day — or any number of other possibilities. (We generally recommend spreading usage over the course of a week if that is feasible.)

For extended practice, students may also sign in remotely using their usernames and secret codes from anywhere!

Technology/Devices Needed

Speak Agent is a web app, meaning that it runs in a browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or Safari. There's nothing to install or download. You can use it on a Chromebook, laptop, desktop, tablet (iPad/Android/Windows), or interactive whiteboard. It runs on devices with a screen that is 7 inches or larger. (That's the size of an iPad Mini.)

[See here](#) for our tech specs if you have more detailed questions.

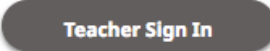
It's also important to know that some activities work best with Guided Practice where you can present, model, or moderate activities on a projector or interactive whiteboard. Other activities work well with students pairing up together. So, you don't need a dedicated device for every single student every time you use Speak Agent!

Getting Started

Setting a Password

Password setup instructions will arrive by email. Just follow the steps in the email.

Signing In


- To sign in, visit teach.speakagent.com and press the  button.
- Use your email address as your username. This will be the same email as the one to which we sent the password instructions.

Your First Speak Agent Lesson

The first time you use Speak Agent with your students, here are some things you should pay attention to:

- First, start by exploring together with your students. Run each activity one by one on the big screen using a projector or interactive whiteboard.
 - ➡ Details on how to use Guided Practice are found on the next page.
- Most activities are organized into "rounds," which are questions, tasks, or words/concepts that require review or responses. A round ends when you complete an answer, make a match, fill a blank, or press a next button or arrow.
 - ➡ With each new activity you've never done before as a class, model the first "round" of the activity.
- Next, start involving your students in deciding on responses together.
- If you have enough classroom devices, you can have students watch you model the first round on the big screen and then starting solving and responding independently or in pairs on their own devices.

Student Logins

You can easily access student login information and download it as a nicely formatted PDF for printing. Just sign into Speak Agent with your teacher login. Select the **Class** menu on the lefthand navigation and find a class you teach. Then press the  button. A PDF will open showing all usernames and secret codes for that class.

Guided Practice in Speak Agent

Guided Practice is generally a good strategy for the beginning of a new unit, daily review of key vocabulary, and for classes where students are new to Speak Agent. It tends to work best with *Word Gallery* and *Video* activities in Speak Agent, but can be done with any activity.

- Find the lesson you want to use with your students.
- Preview the activity you wish to present, model, or moderate.

How to Find a Lesson

1. Sign in with your teacher account.
2. Select **Lessons** on the left-hand menu.
3. If you don't see your lessons available, try selecting the **Organization Lessons** tab.
4. Once you find the lesson you want, click on the title, such as **Math 7 Unit 2A: Coordinate Planes**.

How to Preview a Lesson/Activity

1. Once you click on the lesson title of a lesson you find, it will load the lesson page, as shown below. This page shows the different activities in the lesson.
2. You can preview the lesson clicking **STUDENT PREVIEW** or **Speak Agent Junior**.
3. You can also preview activities singly. (See second arrow in picture below.)

The preview feature allows you to run the lesson or activity directly from your computer.

What Students Do in Speak Agent

Signing In

To Sign In, students visit teach.speakagent.com and choose the **Secret Code** option.



Each student has a username and a secret code. The username for each student is first name + last initial + one or more numbers. The secret code is two pictures, which must be selected in the right order.

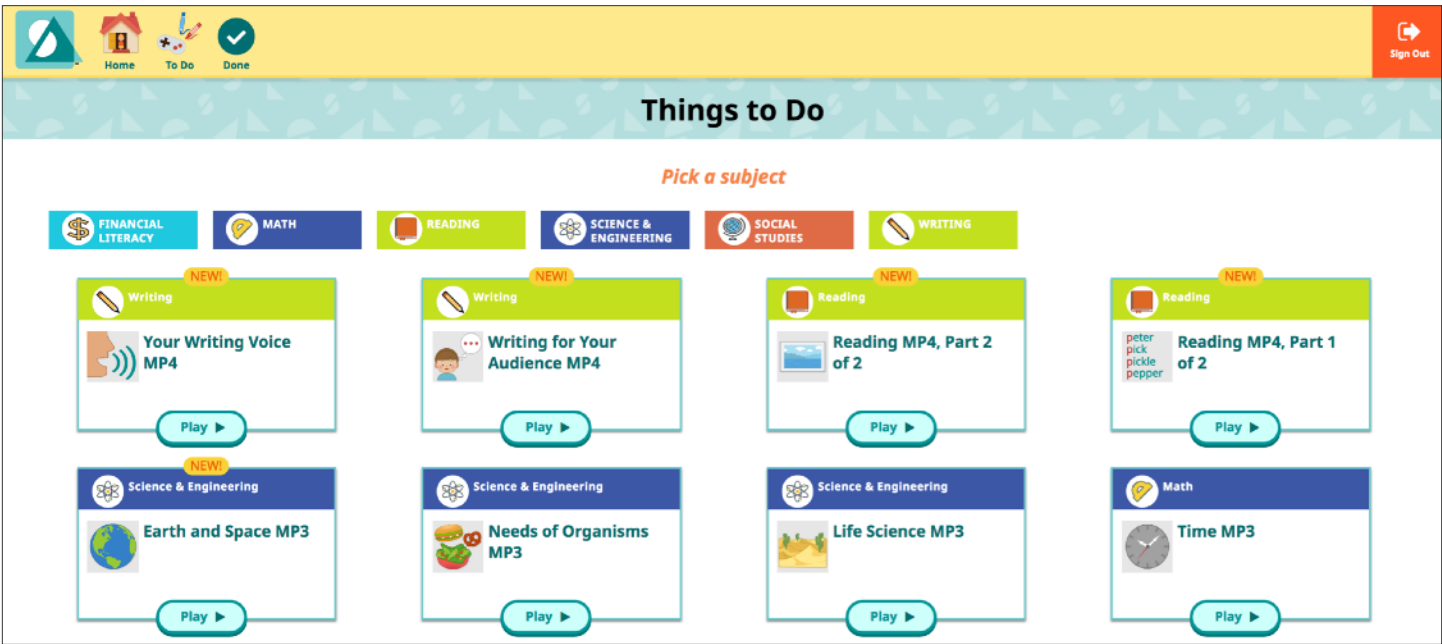
During initial setup, your Speak Agent Implementation Manager will send you a printable PDF with the username and secret code for each student in your class. You can also download this PDF at any time using your teacher account, which we'll discuss in a later section.



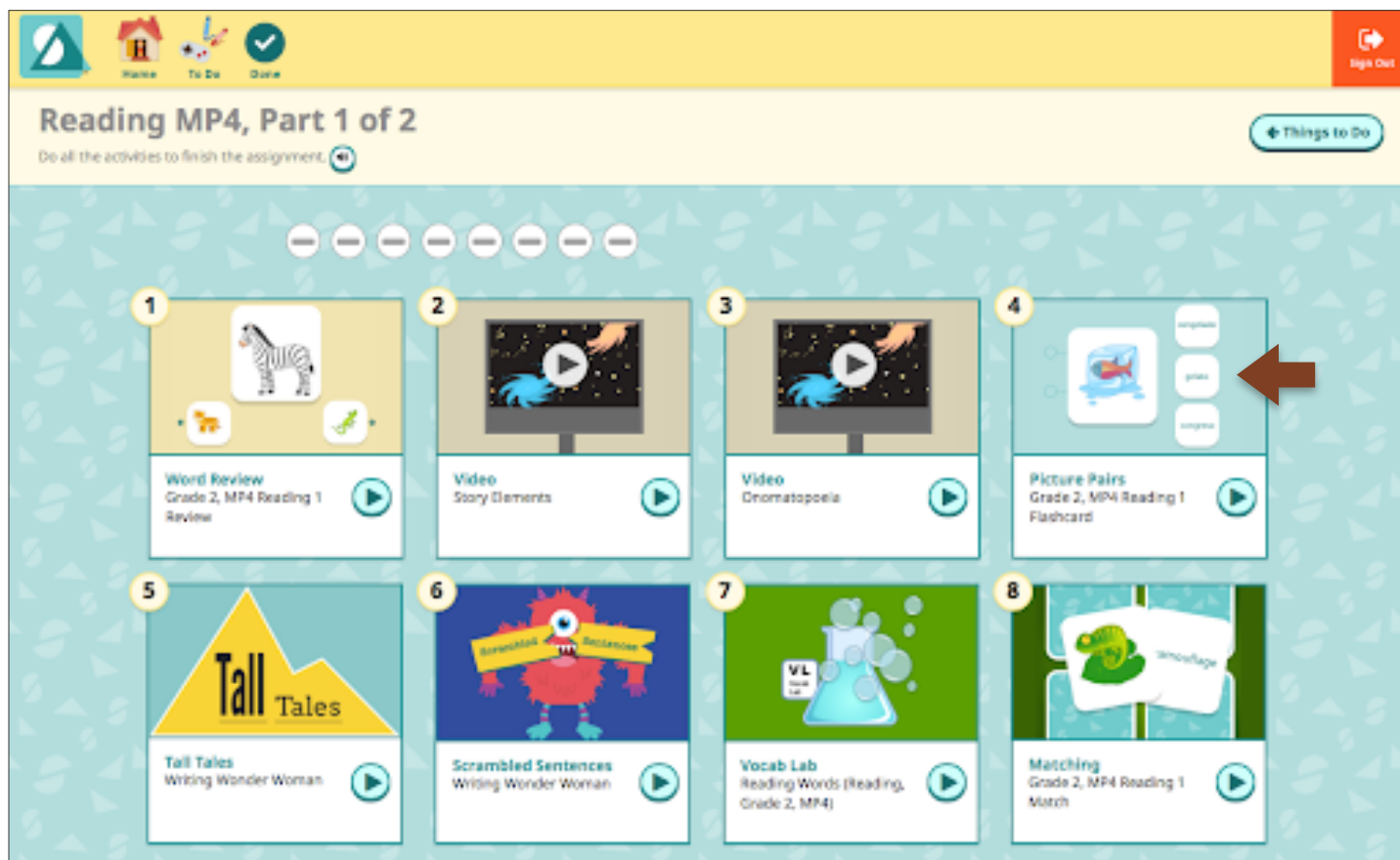
Accessing Digital Lessons

Each digital lesson corresponds to a unit of study in your curriculum. Your Speak Agent Implementation Manager will assign the new lessons to your students based on your curriculum pacing. As the school year progresses, the older lessons will still be available until they are unassigned or archived.

When a student signs in, she or he will see a **To Do** page with the latest assigned lessons. Students just press the **Play!** button to launch a lesson.



When a student selects a digital lesson, she or he sees a screen, as shown below. Students click or tap an activity tile to start that specific activity.



Activities

Each tile in a digital lesson (as above) corresponds to an online activity. There are many different types of interactive activities available with Speak Agent. The way it works is that the activities are templates filled with content tailored to your curriculum, by grade or proficiency level. The various activity templates are detailed in a later section.

The activities are mainly interactive games and exercises that students can practice independently. There are certain activities, however, that lend themselves to guided practice or co-learning.

As students complete each activity, the tiles on the lesson page are checked off. When all activities in a lesson are checked off, that lesson is completed.

Activities within a digital lesson are presented in a recommended order, from left to right and top to bottom. Students may do the activities in any order, however.

Teacher Resources

Activity Guides

Each type of activity has a corresponding two-page Activity Guide. These guides provide learning goals, instructional strategies, how-to information, and any setup needed. They are appended to the end of this Teacher's Guide and are also available separately at speakagent.com.


Lesson Guides

Each digital lesson has an accompanying teacher's guide, too. These are custom-made for each implementation, since the content will be specific to your curriculum. Each lesson guide has

- a list of key vocabulary;
- a listing of activities in the lesson, along with time estimates for each;
- answer keys; and
- any other critical information, such as relevant standards.

Lesson guides are typically shared with teachers via Google Docs.

Student Login Cards


You can easily access student login information and download it as a nicely formatted PDF for printing. Just sign into Speak Agent with your teacher login. Select the **Class** menu on the lefthand navigation and find a class you teach. Then press the  **Print Login Info** button.

Getting Help

- Email: Contact support@speakagent.com with any how-to questions or technical issues.
- Phone: If you're having an issue using Speak Agent during school hours, call your dedicated Implementation Manager.
- Find more information at speakagent.com!

What Teachers Can Do in Speak Agent

Signing In for Teachers

- To Sign In, visit teach.speakagent.com and press the  button.
- Use your work email address as your username.
- Password setup instructions are provided by email. After you sign in, you can reset your password at any time by clicking the Account icon in the top-right corner.

Features

There are a few key features you may wish to access from time to time:



- Print student login cards (discussed on the previous page).
- Print a wordlist as a take-home study sheet.
- View student assignments and progress.
- Provide guided practice.
- View or listen to items in a student's digital portfolio.
- Run a group **Story Spin** activity.
- *Assign lessons (if available in your implementation).*
- *Create or adapt lessons (if available in your implementation).*

Print a Wordlist

You can print color images with labels for all of the words used in a digital lesson. Here's how:

- Select **Wordlists** on the left-hand menu.
- Select the **Organization Wordlists** tab to see all of your organization's wordlists. They are labeled by unit/topic. You can filter the wordlists by grade and language and/or type to search.
- Next, click the wordlist title and it will open that wordlist.
- Press **PRINT**, which is right under the wordlist title, as shown at right.

How Inventions Happen

 **COPY**  **PRINT**

View Student Progress

- Click **Classes & Students** on the left-hand menu.
- Click on a class to see what lessons or activities have been completed.
- The **Students** tab shows the number of lessons done by each student. To be marked "completed" ALL activities in that lesson must be completed.
- The **Lessons** tab shows aggregate progress for each unit of study and which digital lessons are currently assigned to the class/group.
- From the **Students** tab, select a student's name to get to the student details. This page shows all lessons assigned to the student and the # of activities done.

Students	Lessons
15	4
Student Name	Assignments Completed
Edwin V	2 of 4 50%
Neela T	1 of 4 25%
Joeray R	2 of 4 50%
Alden M	3 of 4 75%
Dean K	2 of 4 50%
Grace J	2 of 4 50%
Ellis H	4 of 4 100%
Kamilah G	4 of 4 100%

View Student Portfolio Items

To see a student's digital portfolio, click on a student's name (under Classes & Students). Then select the Portfolio Items box. This will bring you to a new page where you can view any student writing or voice recording samples.

STUDENT: Grace J

[EDIT](#)

2/4
Lessons Completed

1
Portfolio Items

The following activities in Speak Agent generate digital portfolio items:

- *My Voice* - student voice recordings
- *Read Along* - student answers and annotations, together with the original prompt, if any
- *Story Spin* - group writing samples, with draft and edited versions
- *Word Spin* - individual writing samples, with draft and edited versions

Story Spin Group Activity

- To start a game of Story Spin, sign in with your teacher account.
- Then click **Classes and Students** on the left-hand menu.
- Next, click the name of your class to get to the class details page. On the top-right corner of the class details page, you should see an area labeled Group Activities, as shown at right:
- Click **SET UP NEW GAME**.

Group Activities

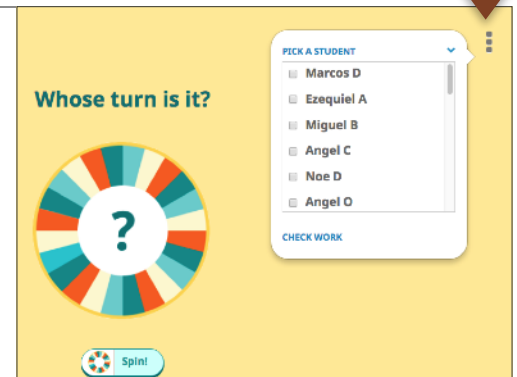
Story Spin

[SET UP NEW GAME](#)

- Choose Yes to include all students.
- Where it says to search for a wordlist, just start typing the unit name and it will search as you type.
- Once you pick a wordlist, the game launches!

Tips for playing:

- The overflow menu (the three vertical dots at top-right of screen) allows you to take a teacher's turn on the first turn if you wish. This lets you model for your students and get a story started.
- You can pick a specific student at any time.
- You can end the game by clicking CHECK WORK, which jumps right to the editing stage. At this point you check the OK box after editing each sentence together.
- You can Skip a student who is absent or does not wish to go.
- Students can click the pictures to insert words into the sentence.
- You can type for your students or have them type, or have them prepare ideas in advance — it's up to you based on your knowledge of your students.
- We suggest holding off on corrective feedback until the Check Work stage so as not to embarrass anyone.



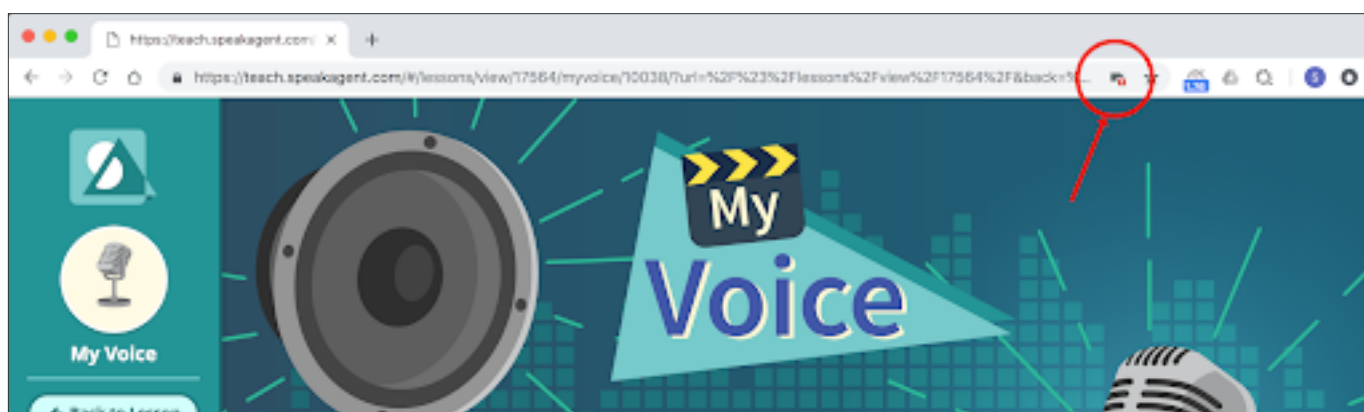
Troubleshooting

Signing In on Shared Devices

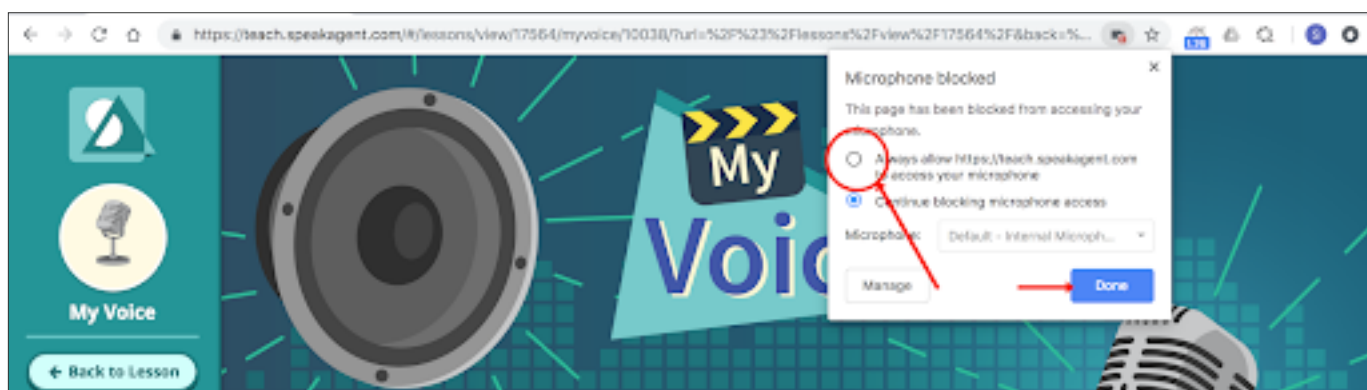
Speak Agent remembers your last login, so students who are using different devices each day may be logged in as another student. Please make sure students using shared devices sign out before putting away their computer or tablet. Also make sure that students using a shared device sign out and sign back in if they see the wrong student name on their dashboard.

My Voice: Microphone Blocked

On some devices, like Chromebooks, the computer may prompt students to "allow" or "block" use of the microphone. They should choose "allow." If, however, they accidentally choose "block," there's an easy way to unblock the mic, so the student can record their voice. The following illustrations are for the Chrome web browser. First, look for the little "blocked" icon, shown inside the red circle in the image below. Then click that little icon.



Next you will see a dialog box. Choose the option that says "Always allow" (speakagent.com). Press **Done**. Voice recording should now work! If it doesn't, try reloading the game.





Speak Agent

Appendix: The Activity Guide Series

What's an Activity Guide?

The academic language learning activities in Speak Agent are the combination of two elements: (1) an activity template and (2) customized content such as vocabulary sets, reading passages, visual aids, and other content items. Speak Agent plugs your tailored content into each template to **fit precisely into your curriculum framework** and units of study.

Each Speak Agent activity guide describes one of the many activities templates available with the technology platform. Each guide includes the following:

- An overview of the activity, including learning goals and any special setup requirements.
- Guidance on how to use the activity, with screenshot examples.
- Evidence-based learning strategies relevant to the activity. The research underpinning these strategies may be found via the [Learner Variability Navigator](#).

Learning Progression Indicators

Each activity addresses one or more stages of academic language development. Look for these indicators in each activity guide to see where in the learning progression each activity belongs.

- 1** Develops familiarity with targeted keywords to achieve the 20+ exposures needed.
- 2** Develops comprehension of each keyword or concept in varied contexts.
- 3** Promotes expressive language where students apply keywords in varied contexts.
- R** Encourages students to reflect upon and/or to retain recently acquired knowledge.



1 2 3 R

Summary

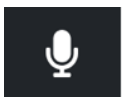
My Voice provides students with practice speaking targeted keywords or short passages. Students record their own voices and choose their favorite recordings to share with teachers. A language buddy may provide real-time feedback.

Learning Goals

- **Familiarity** through listening and speaking makes academic language less intimidating.
- The process of recording, listening, and improving also supports critical skills such as phonemic awareness, decoding, and pronunciation, which help with **comprehension**.
- A secondary goal of *My Voice* is to prepare students for assessments that have a speaking or voice recording component.



Use with a student device such as a Chromebook, laptop, tablet, or desktop.



Requires a built-in microphone. (Most devices have one.) Noisy conditions are okay!



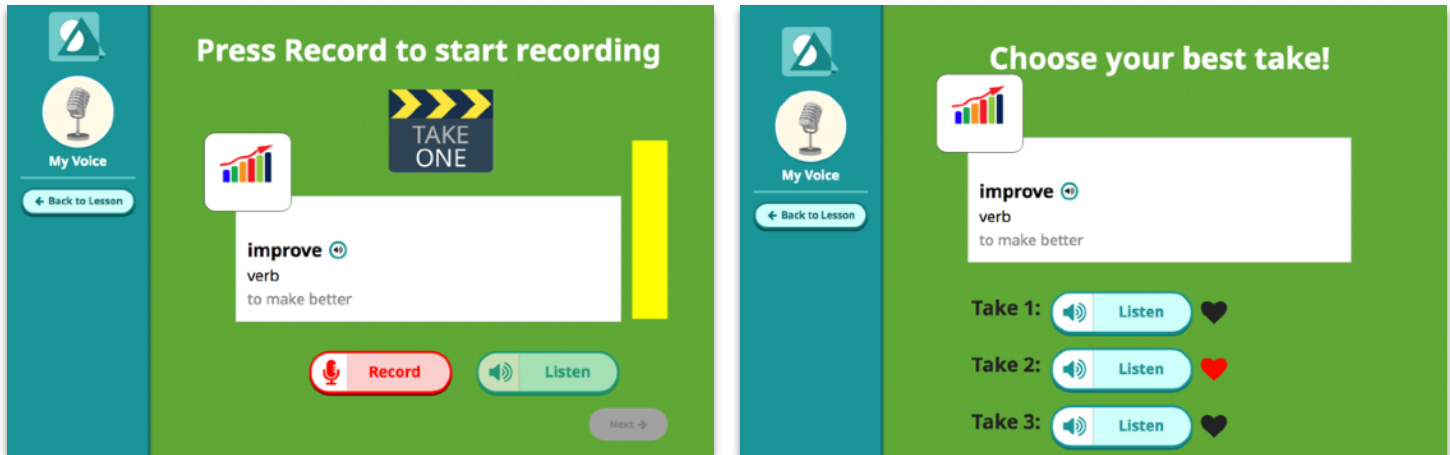
Works best as paired play where students take turns as speaker and listener/critic.



How to Use My Voice

Independent Practice

In *My Voice*, students are shown a list of keywords, passages, or open-ended prompts. They may record them in any order. First, a student listens to the word or passage. Then she records herself speaking. After three takes, she picks a favorite recording. This is saved to the student's digital portfolio.



Teacher Review

Teachers can review each recording in the digital portfolio. To do so, visit the Classes & Students menu and search for the student. On the student details page is a box with the number of portfolio items for that student. Click the box and then choose an item to view. Then you can listen to each recording.



Peer Practice

My Voice works well as a paired activity, with one student in the role of voice artist and the other as language buddy. The buddy can participate in the process by reviewing each take and providing feedback. She or he can select the “favorite” recording to share with the teacher. You can have students switch roles. Or, pair an advanced student with one who needs help and use it for peer mentoring.

Key Learning Strategies



Partner Read-Alouds	Reading aloud helps students to practice reading and fluency skills. Speak Agent's <i>My Voice</i> activity embeds co-learning, which promotes greater accountability and attention to the task. The increased engagement and cooperative nature of paired reading provides leads to further development of decoding, sight recognition, syntax, and vocabulary.
Verbal Repetition	Having students verbally repeat information ensures they are listening and supports remembering. With verbal repetition, learners interact with information, activating multiple brain pathways to help move knowledge from short-term to long-term memory. Having learners recording themselves speaking new words can be especially useful for building phonological and morphological awareness.

Read Along



1 2 3 R

Summary

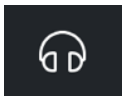
Read Along is a dialogic reading activity that illustrates words and concepts in the context of a short story. Students read and/or listen to each page and then answer a question before continuing on to the next page. Students may also add their own annotations and reflections. Anything they write is saved to their digital portfolio, which authorized teachers may access.

Learning Goals

- Develops **comprehension** through reading and listening to engaging, authentic content.
- Prompts students to **apply** words and concepts by answering contextual questions.
- Encourages **reflection** through open-ended prompts and brief free writing opportunities.



Use with a student device such as a Chromebook, laptop, tablet, or desktop.



Headphones are recommended, since students may wish to listen to the stories.



Use this activity as independent practice.



How to Use Read Along

Individual Practice

Students read and/or listen to the story one page at a time. Each page may have a unique question or prompt. Students must answer the question before continuing to the next page. They may type their response (along with any notes) and press "Save." Students may also return to a page and update a response at any time before the activity is completed. (This overwrites their prior response.)

The screenshot displays a digital reading interface. On the left, a coordinate plane map shows various Washington D.C. landmarks: The White House, Convention Center, National Theater, U.S. Capitol (marked as the origin), Air and Space Museum, and Library of Congress. A yellow arrow points to the U.S. Capitol. Below the map is the text "First stop on the parade route". On the right, a text passage describes a parade starting at the US Capitol and traveling southeast past the Library of Congress. Below the text is a "Listen" button with a speaker icon. At the bottom left, a question card asks: "How many city blocks will the parade travel from the U.S. Capitol to the Library of Congress?" with a text input area and a "Save" button. At the bottom right, there are "Back" and "Next" navigation buttons. The page number "2" is visible in the bottom right corner of the text area.

Teacher Review

All responses are stored in each student's digital portfolio, which authorized teachers may access.

Answer Key

Each Speak Agent digital lesson comes with a lesson guide. The guide will provide an answer key for each Read Along activity. Since many of the questions and prompts are open-ended, there are often many possible right answers, so the answer keys simply provide suggestions.

Key Learning Strategies

Audiovisual Texts	Audio and visual supports enable students to experience texts above their reading skills. Read Along presents the text and audio narration with cues that help readers develop decoding, phonological awareness, morphological awareness, and sight recognition.
Dialogic Reading	Targeted prompting, listening, and decision-making during reading helps students grow academic language and their narrative, attention and syntax skills.
Model Connections to Text	Students may note connections on each page that are meaningful to them. Teachers can communicate with students about their annotations, encouraging self-reflection and growth.



1 2 3 R

Summary

Scrambled Sentences presents one disordered sentence at a time from a short passage. To solve the puzzle and rebuild the story, students put the sentences into the correct order.

Learning Goals

- With this game, students develop **syntax** and learn to **apply** keywords by situating them in the context of sentences and passages. Visual and textual clues such as puzzle shapes, capitalization, and punctuation help students to decipher word order.
- There are four game levels. At level one, several words start in the correct position. Before, during, and after solving the puzzle, students can listen to the passage narrated so as to reinforce comprehension in **context**.



Use with a student device such as a Chromebook, laptop, tablet, or desktop.



Use this activity as independent practice.



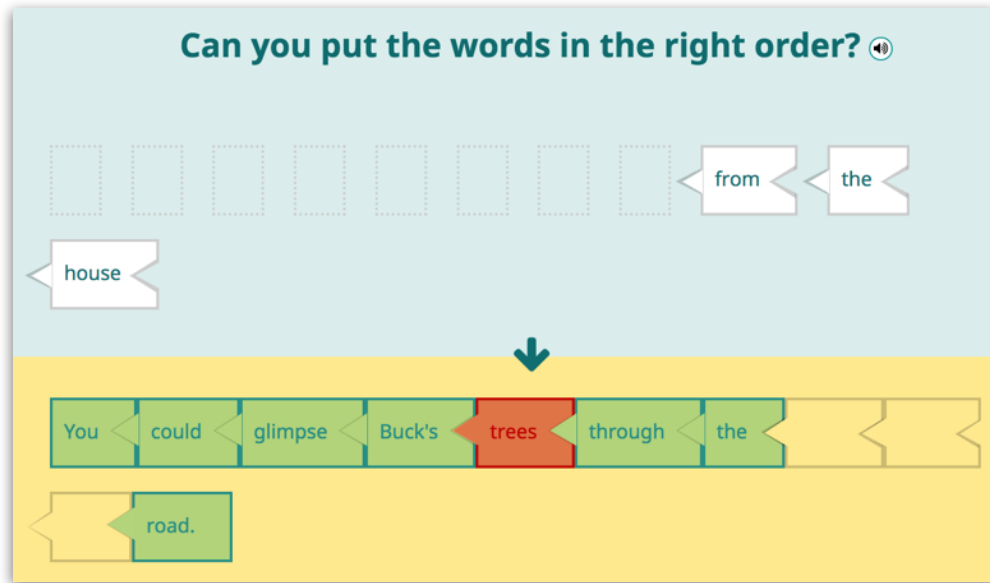
Also works well with paired play where two students work together to solve it.



How to Use Scrambled Sentences

Individual Practice

Scrambled Sentences has four levels of play. Students may select which level to try each session. Advanced students may work their way up to level four quickly, whereas students with emerging skills can still have success at level one and progress at their own pace.



The game provides corrective feedback and allows students to self-correct through experimentation. Audio plays whenever students place a word or solve a sentence. Students can also hear the story read aloud before, during, and after play. This helps to reinforce context and provides decoding support.

Peer Practice

Scrambled Sentences is also engaging as a paired activity. Students solve the sentence puzzles together and share strategies for achieving correct word order. It can also work as a mentor-mentee activity where a student who is behind can learn from her or his peer. We suggest that the activity be played on the mentee's computer or tablet for two reasons: (1) the data will be tracked for the student who needs the help and (2) the mentee will feel more engaged and empowered if he/she is in control of the device.

Key Learning Strategies

Game Puzzles	<i>Scrambled Sentences</i> helps students to visualize how to connect one word to another. By engaging student attention in active learning, the game motivates students to develop meaningful connections with authentic content that is directly aligned with the unit of study.
Scaffolds	Students may self-select from four game levels that determine how many hints they receive.
Word Manipulatives	Actively manipulating sentence structure and order deepens a student's understanding of the way sentences are formed and how words of different categories are applied. It can especially help with understanding usage in varied contexts. The game's kinesthetic, visual learning aspect also helps students to transition new words to long-term memory.


1 2 **3** R

Summary

Story Spin is a culminating activity that can be used with any Speak Agent lesson. It engages students in team creation and editing of a story around authentic classroom content. Students each take a turn creating a sentence that advances the story line and uses unit vocabulary.

Learning Goals

- The benefit of this activity is that students learn to **apply** key concepts through language in varied contexts and varied word forms.
- They can also write collaboratively and receive realtime feedback on writing from peers.
- Secondly, *Story Spin* develops knowledge of **syntax** and common transition words.



Use with a projector or interactive whiteboard.



Use this activity with the whole class.



Requires teacher modeling and moderation.

How to Use Story Spin



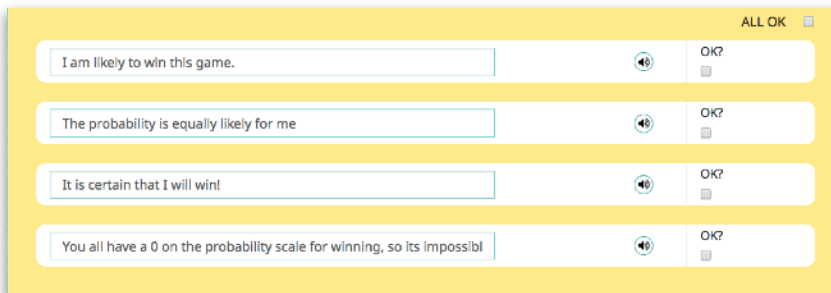
Whole Class Story Creation

Story Spin randomly selects a student to be the writer. (You can also choose/skip a student.) Each student gets a turn! For emerging writers, let them vocalize their thoughts and type for them. Have them come up to your computer and pick the keywords to insert at the right points in the sentence. Gradually have them take over more of the typing until the point they are able to take the lead with your support.



Peer Editing (Teacher-Moderated)

After they finish drafting, students edit their collective work and learn from one another's mistakes. The author of each sentence is hidden so that no one is embarrassed! (Speak Agent's digital portfolio tracks who wrote what.) You can have students read the sentences aloud or play the text-to-speech audio.



Peer editing step

Original Sentence	Corrected Sentence
The Moon could be shape like a crescent.	The Moon could be shaped like a crescent.
moon phases are when some of the Moon is bright and some of the Moon is dark	Moon phases are when some of the Moon is bright and some of the Moon is dark.
stars are used to make constellations	Stars are used to make constellations.

Digital portfolio view

Small Group Activity

Alternatively, you can divide your class into smaller groups (four is a good size) who cluster around a computer to create and edit short stories in quick succession. Then you can do a "gallery walk" and have students share their best with the class, if time allows. Only try this once your students are experienced with *Story Spin* and are able to compose and type independently.

Key Learning Strategies



Collaborative Writing	Peers work together to plan, draft, and revise compositions, improving writing quality.
Feedback on Writing	Immediate, specific feedback during the writing process can help students practice metacognition while refining their writing skills.
Word Manipulatives	Students can select visuals that insert words into sentences. Actively manipulating sentences deepens understanding of how they are formed and of new concepts in context.
Whole Language	Students compose story parts that make meaningful connections to their units of study.

Tall Tales



1 2 3 R

Summary

Tall Tales presents an ad libs-style cloze activity in the context of a short story or anecdote. To complete the activity, students choose the words and phrases to insert into the story. Students select the most appropriate picture and label combination from a set of options. They may listen to each word or phrase and can also listen to the story at any stage.

Learning Goals

- *Tall Tales* builds **comprehension** using dialogic reading and visual aids. Each blank requires a word that both fits into **context** and matches a specific category, such as a part of speech.
- After all blanks are filled, the game provides corrective feedback and clues so that students may fix their mistakes. This helps to reinforce context and provides decoding support.



Use with a student device such as a Chromebook, laptop, tablet, or desktop.



Use this activity as independent practice.



Also works well with paired play where two students work together to solve it.





How to Use Tall Tales


Individual Practice




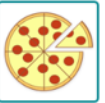




Students gap-fill the story by choosing a word for each blank using the current unit's vocabulary. With a single click or tap, the words go into the right place. Each word has a visual and an audio play button. After all blanks are filled, students press "Check My Work" to see whether each answer fits into the sentence correctly. Then they can self-correct any mistakes. Students can also listen to the story read aloud before checking their answers. This helps to reinforce context and provides decoding support.


The Egg That Grew





There once was a tiny NOUN that grew on a big leaf. One day, it hatched and a NOUN came out. The little butterfly larva VERB lots and lots of NOUN. Soon it formed a NOUN around its body. Inside it changed into a NOUN. Four hours later it could VERB! That's the last stage of the butterfly NOUN. The ADJECTIVE butterfly could now lay its own eggs! Its NOUN from egg to butterfly was complete.


Choose a noun.
A noun is a person, place, thing, or idea. 





caterpillar 


baby 


egg 


monkey 

pizza 

ate 

hippopotamus 

milkweed 

CLOSE 

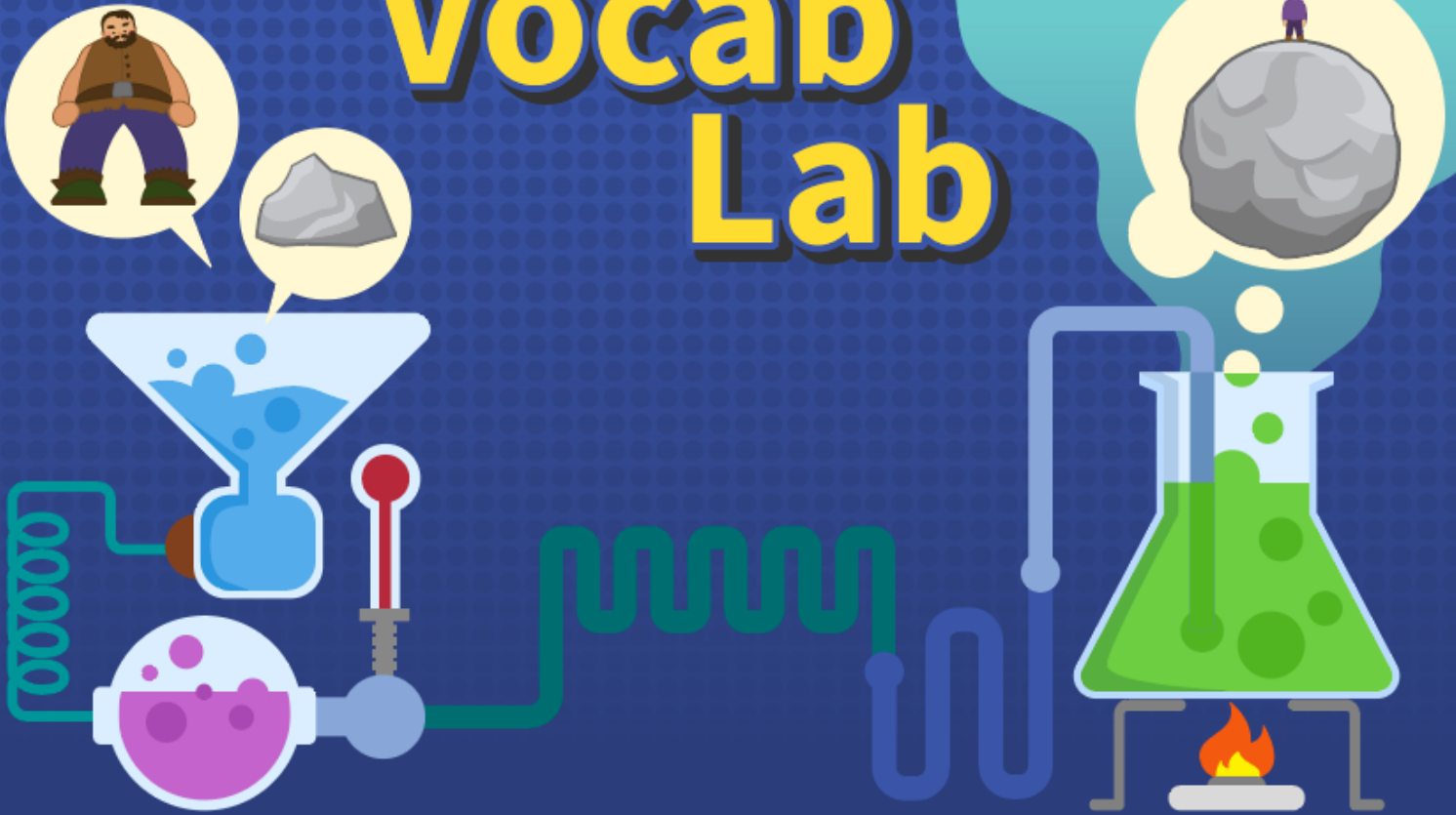
Peer Practice

Tall Tales is also engaging as a paired activity. Students can solve the stories together and share strategies for picking the correct words. It can also work as a mentor-mentee activity where a student who is behind can learn from a peer. We suggest that the activity be played on the mentee's computer or tablet for two reasons: (1) the data will be tracked for the student who needs the help and (2) the mentee will feel more engaged and empowered if he or she is in control of the device.

Key Learning Strategies

Audiovisual Stories	Students complete sentences by choosing words that match grammatical and semantic categories. They also listen to fluent reading and experience texts above their reading level.
Dialogic Reading	Targeted prompting, listening, and decision-making during reading helps students grow academic language and their narrative, attention and syntax skills.
Visual Aids	Visuals make words more accessible and help students to recognize relationships among words and sentences, develop reading skills, and to retrieve content/meaning from memory.

Vocab Lab



1 2 3 R

Summary

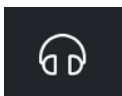
Vocab Lab uses known words to develop a nuanced understanding of complex words and concepts. Students first listen to a "word story" (a short passage) that uses a keyword in multiple contexts or forms. Then they select known words (like giant and rock) that combine to describe or illustrate a target word (like boulder). Students mix "ingredients" (known words) in a flask until they solve the word formula.

Learning Goals

- Vocab Lab develops **comprehension** of challenging new concepts.
- Using this analytical method students uncover the nuanced meaning of a particular word sense, rather than simply memorizing definitions, synonyms, or antonyms.



Use with a student device such as a Chromebook, laptop, tablet, or desktop.



Headphones are recommended, since students must listen to the word stories.




Model this activity for the class before having students try it independently.





How to Use Vocab Lab


Individual Practice

Vocab Lab presents one target word at a time from the lesson vocabulary set. Students first read and/or listen to a short passage to understand the context of the target concept (a tier 2 or 3 word/phrase). This passage is paired with a photo showing the story in action. Students can listen to the story read aloud as many times as they wish. This helps to reinforce context and to provide decoding support.

Read the passage below to learn about the word in the box at right. 



probability 


 Listen

The football team captains from Navy and Wake Forest stood at the 50-yard line. One captain tossed a coin into the air. The probability of the coin landing on "heads" was .5. The probability of getting "tails" was also .5. The probabilities for getting "heads" and "tails" were equally likely. Now imagine a coin with "heads" on both sides. If you called "heads," the probability of winning would be 1. That means you would be certain to win!


Students can then experiment and learn from mistakes. They need to put ingredient words into the flask that, together, compose the target word. Each "ingredient word" is an attribute of that nuanced tier 2 or 3 concept. The game has audio help for students who cannot read the ingredient or target words.


Whole Class Modeling


Before having students solve *Vocab Lab* individually, work with the whole class (e.g., on a projector) to solve some of the target concepts together. This makes individual practice more productive. If time allows, you can even have students take turns helping you to read parts of the the word stories aloud to practice reading.


Choose the "ingredient" words that best describe the word in the box. 


Ingredients


 why

 to stop


 reason

 to happen

 chance

probability 

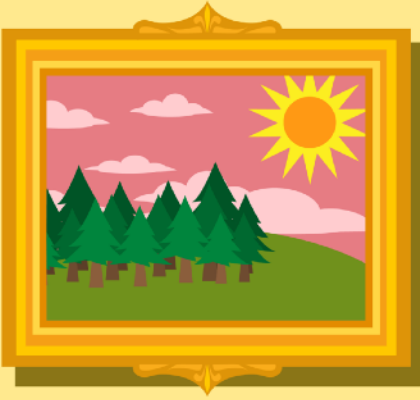
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Key Learning Strategies

Audiovisual Texts	Audio and visual supports enable students to experience texts above their reading skills. <i>Vocab Lab</i> enables students to read, listen to audio recordings, and gain context clues from relevant visuals. By listening to fluent reading and the word or concept used in multiple contexts, students receive decoding support and are able to focus on comprehension.
Dialogic Reading	Targeted prompting, listening, and decision-making during reading helps students grow academic language and their narrative, attention and syntax skills. <i>Vocab Lab</i> prompts students to analyze the target word concept directly after reading/listening to the story.
Game-Based Learning	Puzzle and word games help students visualize how to connect one word to another. <i>Vocab Lab</i> challenges students to combine words they know to construct target words. Active learning and corrective feedback enable integrated comprehension of target concepts.

Word Gallery



1 2 3 R

Summary

Word Gallery introduces new vocabulary at the start of a unit. It includes two views: word wall and image gallery. Each word in the gallery comes with photos and illustrations that display well on a big screen. *Word Gallery* supports both guided and independent practice.

Learning Goals

- Builds **familiarity** through multimodal exposure and repeated practice.
- Creates associations between words and meaningfully connected visuals.
- Provides opportunities for listening and speaking with teacher-led prompting.



Present new words using a projector or interactive whiteboard.



Start this activity with the whole class learning together before Independent Practice.



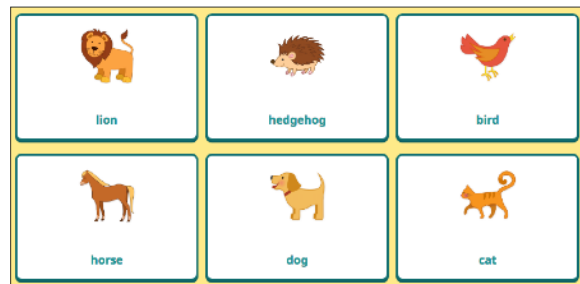
Recommended for Guided Practice. Students can also use *Word Gallery* independently.

How to Use Word Gallery



Guided Practice

When starting a new unit, introduce new words on a big screen. Start with the word wall (shown at right). Read the words aloud and have students repeat. Then select an image to enter gallery mode (shown below). Use the arrows to cycle through word images. The top navigation accesses more words. Talk about each image using the word and/or ask students what they think the word means.



< lion

hedgehog

bird >

<

>

● ● ● ●

Part of speech: noun
Definition: a small, spiky mammal

Independent Practice

Students can navigate through the words and images at their own pace and listen to narrations. It is ideal to do this briefly on a daily or frequent basis for fluent recall. Each word includes a brief learner's definition. Some words may also include a caption to provide context for how the word may be applied.

Key Learning Strategies

Multimodal Exposure	For ELLs and struggling learners, at least 20 exposures are needed to recognize a new word or concept!
Listening Repetition	Narration with visual aids supports decoding and phonological awareness. It uses the verbal working memory path to map visual stimuli to speech sounds.
Daily Review	5-8 minutes of review strengthens previous learning and can lead to fluent recall. Frequent practice allows students to see words as a unit rather than individual letters, increasing sight recognition — they can use working memory to focus on comprehension.