



Vocabulary Rationale

We always strive to evaluate our teaching methods with the goal of improving student learning. The Common Core Standards, which are research based, support a different approach to vocabulary acquisition than what we have used in the past. As a result, we will not be using the vocabulary textbooks, but will be studying vocabulary in conjunction with the novels being read. Below we have outlined some of the National Reading Panel findings that propel our decision to make a change.

According to the National Reading Panel (NRP) vocabulary is identified as one of the five major components of reading. The NRP stated that vocabulary plays an important role both in learning to read and in comprehending text: readers cannot understand text without knowing what most of the words mean.

Among the findings of the NRP are the following statements in bold print followed by our accommodations in the classroom:

- 1) **Provide direct instruction of vocabulary words for a specific text.** During each week of homework, direct instruction will be given.
- 2) **Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items are important.** Students will practice using the words for homework assignments and they will be encouraged to use them in novel discussions and in their written expression in the classroom.
- 3) **Vocabulary words should be those that the learner will find useful in many contexts.** Words from the novels that students will be using in the classroom have been chosen with this in mind.
- 4) **Vocabulary tasks should be restructured as necessary.** Accommodations for individuals will be made as necessary.



5) **Vocabulary learning is effective when it entails active engagement that goes beyond definitional knowledge.** During book discussions, students will be expected and encouraged to use vocabulary words.

6) **Computer technology can be used effectively to help teach vocabulary.** Students are encouraged to use computer apps for learning and practicing vocabulary.



7) **Vocabulary can be acquired through incidental learning.** Reading at home and at school are highly encouraged and expected. Students have set reading goals for the first quarter, and will evaluate and set new goals each quarter. Then they are expected to document their classroom and homework reading in their reading logs.

8) **Dependence on a single vocabulary instruction method will not result in optimal learning.** The study of vocabulary from a textbook is not the most effective way to increase vocabulary acquisition.

It is with these ideas that we are implementing a new vocabulary approach. We hope that you will agree that vocabulary instruction that is integral to what students are already engaged in reading and studying will be most effective.