The purpose of this walkthrough checklist is to help principals monitor and support vocabulary instruction in their schools more effectively. The checklist can be used to build a leader’s knowledge and to provide guidelines for structuring school-wide professional development. The Key Vocabulary checklist has a specific focus on effective vocabulary instruction and the expectation that this instruction will be consistently seen in all classrooms.

**About Walkthroughs (Rissman et al., 2009)**

The classroom walkthrough is a structured observation undertaken by the principal or other school leaders or teams who visit classrooms frequently to look at instructional practice and student learning. This brief visit is separate from the formal teacher evaluation process. The walk-through was never intended as an evaluative tool; instead, it is intended to serve as a catalyst for creating a collaborative school environment. Such environments are characterized by common, clear expectations for teaching and learning by staff members, including both teachers and principals, who participate in reflective dialogues about their work. While limited to three- to five-minute observations, the walk-through’s brevity is balanced by more frequent visits. Over time, and within subject areas and grade levels, a cumulative overview may reveal instructional patterns of strengths and weaknesses. While many walk-through formats are designed to gather information pertaining to a number of areas, the Key Vocabulary checklist was designed to focus only on strategy instruction.

Recent research has found that the amount of time principals spent in classrooms and the quality of their feedback to teachers were important predictors of school achievement. Effective principals analyze instruction and student learning through regular observations and provide feedback to teachers with the purpose of improving classroom instruction. Information gathered in the walk through is useful to inform principals as they work with individual teachers; in addition, when collected over time and computed across disciplines, grade levels, content areas, or school wide, the information can help principals identify areas of strength and weakness. While it is critical to remember that one brief visit is not enough to accurately portray the daily instruction that takes place, cumulative data gathered over a six to nine-week period may enable a principal to make an informed case for instructional improvement and for planning PD.

### Walkthrough Checklist for Principals

#### Key Vocabulary Routine Use in Content Classrooms

*Directions:* Place a check in the column for each indicator observed during the visit. Use the space provided to make any notes or reflections to facilitate follow-up discussion with the teacher. Note the date and time of each visit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISITS</th>
<th>INSTRUCTION INDICATORS</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### General Vocabulary Instruction

- Provides students with explicit instruction about a vocabulary activity or word-learning strategy, including:
  - clear goals and directions
  - modeling
  - guided practice
  - independent practice, including opportunities to work in small, collaborative groups to practice use of strategies
- Embeds vocabulary instruction in content instruction throughout the period/day
- Avoids identifying a specific time of the week to teach vocabulary

#### Previewing Vocabulary

- Generates lists of words to preview before students read
- Uses *Student Knowledge Rating Checklists* to have students identify words they do and do not know

#### Connecting vocabulary to background knowledge and related words

- Uses any of the following activities:
  - Semantic mapping
  - Categorizing of words
  - Semantic feature analysis
  - Scaling
- Presents and discusses new words in relation to the background knowledge and other related words about a topic
### Selecting words to teach in-depth

- Uses a framework for selecting a small group of essential content words to teach in-depth

- Uses any of the following activities to teach a word in-depth:
  - Frayer/Four Square
  - Concept Definition Map
  - Two-Column Notes

- Provides multiple exposures to essential words over time

- Uses and teaches “user-friendly” definitions

### Using the context

- Identifies opportunities in content reading to demonstrate how use of context may help determine the meaning of a new word

- Explicitly teaches context clues

### Teaching word parts

- Explicitly teaches that words have meaningful parts (prefixes, suffixes, roots)

- Models identification of word parts using content vocabulary

- Explicitly teaches common prefixes, roots and suffixes

### Promotes word consciousness

- Encourages students to share new and interesting words

- Provides access to wide reading materials

- Embeds word play activities during classroom instruction

- Avoids having student simply memorize dictionary definitions

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**TEACHER:**

**CLASSROOM:**

**Visit 1**

By:  
Date: / /  
Time: -

**Visit 2**

By:  
Date: / /  
Time: -

**Visit 3**

By:  
Date: / /  
Time: -