



Word of the Day

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Contents

Word of the Day	vi	rating	20	scramble	40
sparkle	1	bashful	21	boast	41
grumpy	2	scrumptious	22	frosty	42
gadget	3	banish	23	annoy	43
swish	4	gaze	24	soar	44
furious	5	echo	25	aghast	45
mansion	6	hideous	26	caption	46
dilemma	7	nibble	27	obvious	47
majestic	8	clumsy	28	participate	48
ooze	9	wisdom	29	cackle	49
minute	10	spectacular	30	hazard	50
dusk	11	hobby	31	novel	51
convince	12	pursue	32	sly	52
nutritious	13	loyal	33	bold	53
embarrass	14	recently	34	unruly	54
flabbergasted	15	occupation	35	yank	55
hustle	16	mumble	36	texture	56
inspire	17	suspicious	37	refuse	57
opinion	18	limber	38	drowsy	58
devour	19	scold	39	slang	59

Word of the Day

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zilch	60	canine	81	lavender	102
hilarious	61	graceful	82	odor	103
pledge	62	betray	83	legible	104
absurd	63	anonymous	84	sprint	105
unite	64	famished	85	capable	106
vast	65	navigate	86	logical	107
determined	66	alert	87	genius	108
accomplishment	67	browse	88	pounce	109
trot	68	brittle	89	cherish	110
weary	69	bamboozle	90	numerous	111
adolescent	70	antique	91	wary	112
rumor	71	literally	92	delicate	113
rarely	72	stagger	93	doubt	114
contribute	73	habit	94	hunch	115
porous	74	swarm	95	vocabulary	116
aspire	75	notorious	96	oval	117
reveal	76	identical	97	realistic	118
livestock	77	expedition	98	wavy	119
peculiar	78	drab	99	ancient	120
meander	79	fidget	100	duet	121
fabulous	80	memorable	101	tradition	122

Word of the Day

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fussy	123	thrive	143	bravo	163
disaster	124	risky	144	confident	164
daydream	125	hopeless	145	bland	165
curious	126	accurate	146	assist	166
unanimous	127	tremble	147	masterpiece	167
apology	128	infinite	148	swirl	168
prowl	129	poultry	149	sleuth	169
suspense	130	coincidence	150	abrupt	170
persist	131	bouquet	151	replica	171
stroll	132	sympathize	152	baffle	172
limp	133	courageous	153	smithereens	173
glorious	134	appreciate	154	expert	174
drizzle	135	bulky	155	lukewarm	175
panic	136	absolutely	156	appetite	176
daredevil	137	blissful	157	courteous	177
dramatic	138	assemble	158	encourage	178
humongous	139	eerie	159	artificial	179
keepsake	140	essential	160	farewell	180
witness	141	butterfingers	161	Index	181
banner	142	quench	162		

Word of the Day

Word of the Day is designed to help young children develop an appreciation for interesting vocabulary words. The goal is to set a foundation for a lifelong love of words. It is also intended to introduce young children to a way of building their oral vocabularies one word at a time, a routine that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

Setting this foundation for word learning in the primary grades is important because as early as 4th grade, children’s reading comprehension skills suffer from poor word knowledge. While many of today’s children are developing oral vocabularies at a prodigious rate, others are falling far behind.

With *Word of the Day*, children learn to enjoy using more sophisticated words in their daily discourse. They learn that people are impressed when they use a word like *drowsy* instead of *tired*, or *sparkle* instead of *shine*. These reactions motivate children to begin incorporating new words into their lives, words they encounter at home, from TV, or in their reading—not just the words that they learn from this book.

A Word a Day

As the name of this book implies, there are enough words in this book to introduce one new word each day. While the order in which you introduce the words is not important, most teachers find it easiest to start at Day 1 and go on to Day 180. Sometimes words introduced on previous days are used on later days in the Word Story or Talk About It section. Use these opportunities to review the meaning of the previously introduced words.

Word Choice

Words were chosen that children can easily incorporate into a typical day, but are a little more sophisticated than people might normally expect to hear from them. Since the goal is for children to love words, we chose words that are fun to use. Words such as *swish*, *cackle*, and *flabbergasted* have interesting sounds that make them fun to say. Other words such as *daydream* have interesting parts that help you know what they mean. We avoided words that are difficult to use syntactically correctly, or would sound awkward used orally in a child's life. Our word list includes a variety of word types: nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives.

Getting Started

Take a few minutes each day to introduce the new word of the day. Write the day's word on a 3" x 5" card and hold it up for the class to see. Then use the notes on each page to present the word to the class. You will want to provide enough detail about the new word so that young children can begin using the word correctly in all its nuances.

Word Story

Introduce the Wordly family to the children. As you might expect from their name, the Wordly family has a good vocabulary. Each word is introduced with a story about the Wordly family in which the word of the day comes into play. Read the word story and then briefly summarize what the word means in words the children can understand.

Talk About It

Ask your students questions like those listed that get them to think about the word and what it means. Help them use the word in different situations. If children use the word incorrectly in a response, rephrase their answer so the usage is correct.

Making It Meaningful

Suggestions are provided for active ways for children to build meaning. Sometimes you might have the children find examples of the word in the classroom. Other times, they might act out the word or draw pictures to show the word. These short activities are intended to help children remember the word in a context they understand.

Next Steps

After you have introduced the word, challenge the children to use the word at least five times that day, either at school or at home. Brainstorm some ways the children can do this. For example, for the word *drowsy*, the children might think of these ways to use the word:

Mom, were you drowsy at work today?

I think the baby is ready for bed. She looks drowsy.

The next day, have the children tell ways they were able to use the new word.

Word Jar

Keep a large jar in your classroom and put each new word card in it before you move on to a new word. Periodically, pull out a word card and see if the children can remember what it means. Ask them to use the word in a sentence.

Assessment

Assess children's appreciation for new words by listening to them talk and noting whether they are trying to use more sophisticated vocabulary in their oral language.

sparkle

verb

Word Story

Mrs. Wordly has a diamond ring that sparkles in the bright sun. When you look at it in the sunshine, it looks as if it throws off sparks of light like stars in the sky.

When something *sparkles*, it shines with many flashing points of light.

Talk About It

- ✦ What makes things sparkle?
- ✦ Name things that sparkle.
- ✦ Can eyes sparkle? Can a piano performance sparkle?
- ✦ Have you ever used sparklers? Why are they called that?
- ✦ Have you ever had sparkling water? How does it sparkle?

Picture It *Materials: glitter, glue sticks*

Write the word *sparkle* using a glue stick. Pour glitter on the glue so the word sparkles.

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grumpy

adjective

Word Story

Yesterday was a long day for Mr. Wordly. He was busy, and nothing seemed to go right for him. By evening, he was so grumpy he didn't want to talk to anyone.

When you're *grumpy*, you feel grouchy and not very friendly.

Talk About It

- ✦ Do you ever get grumpy? What makes you grumpy?
- ✦ How do you feel when you're grumpy? What words describe that feeling?
- ✦ Remember the dwarf Grumpy in *Snow White*? How did he act?

Act It Out

Pretend you are grumpy. Show how you might look, move, and act when you are grumpy.

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gadget

noun

Word Story

The Wordly family saw a movie about a silly spy. The spy had all kinds of interesting gadgets to help him trick and catch the bad guys. One was a pen that squirted out laughing gas.

Gadgets are small tools or devices that often help you in some way. Lots of times we use the word *gadget* to describe an especially interesting or creative item.

Talk About It

- ✦ Some gadgets are common tools we use at home like a can opener. What kinds of gadgets do you or your parents use at home?
- ✦ Have you seen any movies where the characters used interesting gadgets?
- ✦ If you could invent a gadget, what would it be?

Picture It

Invent a little gadget that people would love to have. Draw a picture of it.

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swish

verb

Word Story

The oldest Wordly girl went to a party in a fancy dress. As she walked, the dress swished. It seemed to be saying “swish, swish, swish” as she moved.

When something makes a light rustling sound, we say it *swishes*. The word *swish* sounds just like the sound!

Talk About It

- ✦ Let’s all say the word *swish* together to hear what it sounds like.
- ✦ What things might swish?
- ✦ Can a basketball going through a net swish?
- ✦ Can you think of other words that sound like a noise? (crash, pop, boom, etc.)

Act It Out

Let’s pretend we’re walking through some very tall grass. We have to move it aside with our hands as we go. Let’s swish through the whole field.

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